

Calvinist Contact

A Reformed Weekly

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Oliver North changes goal orientation to Christian model

Bill Fledderus

BURLINGTON, Ont. — Retired Lt.-Col. Oliver North says he has redefined his priorities after discovering that he had been neglecting the items which should have been most important: his relationship with God and his relations with his family.

"I don't know how the North family would have made it through the intense pressures of my trial without our personal Saviour," says North. He explains that his religious faith brought him to Canada to support the work of Christian broadcasters.

North was in Ontario recently to act as a sort of media magnet for the Crossroads Broadcast Summit, held in Burlington. (Crossroads is the company known for its evangelistic television show "100 Huntley Street").

"I am a very goal-oriented sort of person," says North, "and my new goals are to be a better husband, a better father, a more articulate spokesman for my faith. I am also trying to be stewardly in my business."

Law enforcement and moral decline

North, who achieved fame during his televised trial and conviction for involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal, now runs Guardian Technologies, a company of 23 employees, "mostly Vietnamese Americans," which manufactures law enforcement equipment. He lives with his wife Betsy and their four children in Virginia.

He recently published a book, and has been using his notoriety to issue challenges against moral decline in America.

His new attitude developed as North went for counselling to his army chaplain Larry Boyet. "Romans 8: 28 became my motto," he says, "as it reads in my Marine Bible, 'Accept God's plan for your life, and it will be all right.'"

"I am an unabashed follower of an unemployed carpenter," he says grinning.

Murphy Brown raises her head

When North was asked what kind of Christian broadcasting he appreciates and follows regularly, he declined to rate one program over another. He did say that "Jim Dobson is in our house every day," (referring to Dr. James Dobson's daily Christian radio broadcast "Focus on the Family").

"We try to be careful about what our children watch on television," says North. "There is a great deal of anti-family values being promoted."

"If you want me to comment about *Murphy Brown*," he says, "I'd say it's unfortunate that the authors of that fictional character didn't follow the biblical model for the family, but thank God that at least they saved that baby's life." (Murphy Brown is a single mother television character recently singled out by vice-president Dan Quayle as a bad role model).

See NORTH -- p. 2...



Photo: Bill Fledderus

Oliver North (right) talks about anti-family values in television while Jim Cantelou, president of Crossroads USA, looks on.

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Thinkbit:

A school news journal from Smithers, B.C., announced that "if parents haven't yet seen the report card handed out last Thursday, the odds are that the results are less than stellar."

From: BVCS NEWS

CRC's 'Women in office' decision pleases neither side



Photo: Marian Van Til

Two sides "stretch" to meet in the middle?: Rev. Gordon Pols (Cl. Alberta North) favours ordaining women. Dr. Joel Nederhood (Cl. Illiana) opposes it. Both were on synod's advisory committee on the issue and both supported the "compromise" which synod finally adopted.

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — "It's not our church; it's a men's church. I feel like I've been raped and thrown by the side of the road," exclaimed Calvin seminary master of divinity student Bonny Wynia in reaction to the Christian Reformed synod's refusal to allow women to be ordained as elders and ministers.

"As far as I'm concerned," asserted Joyce Van Dyk, another seminarian, "they've insulted us. 'Use their gifts, but don't pay them; exploit them.'"

Van Dyk was referring to a provision adopted by synod which will from now on allow the "use of gifts of women ... including ... to teach, expound the Word of God and provide pastoral care" — the duties of pastors and elders

— without being ordained as pastors and elders.

On the other side of the issue people weren't happy either. "I think what synod did was almost the worst of all things," said Rev. Dick Stienstra of Dunnville, Ont., who was in the audience. "It alienated the conservative element and it alienated the women. Some of both of those will leave the denomination."

After voting not to ratify the Synod 1990 decision to allow women to be ordained as elders and pastors, synod accepted an advice committee's compromise position which recommended that at the same time the churches be "encouraged" to use

See WOMEN -- p. 2...

Government plans to tighten immigration rules, churches worry

Bert Witvoet

OTTAWA — The federal government is proposing new legislation that could tell new immigrants where to live for the first few years and submit immigration applicants to fingerprinting so that future welfare fraud can be combatted.

The proposed changes are among several others that seek to meet the demands of those who believe that present immigration policies permit abuse of Canada's generosity towards the world's refugees.

One of the proposed changes wants to bar refugee claimants from "safe" countries like the United States and European nations. Another one will stream immigrants into three categories, the preferred stream being reserved for wealthy investors and immediate family of landed immigrants in Canada ("immediate" refers to children below 18 and spouses).

The second stream would allow no more than a set quota of parents and grandparents of Canadian residents to immigrate to Canada. The third level, also limited by quota, would be open only to workers whose skills are needed in Canada.

A Canadian Press story by Warren Caragata on the proposed changes headlines that "Immigration changes play to the right." In the story, Tom Flanagan, a Reform Party spokesperson, says that the proposed measures are moving in the direction that his party has been calling for.

In the meantime, the Canadian Council of Churches has issued a press release that calls for more time to reflect on the changes. The council is afraid that the government may use a summer session of Parliament "to speedily pass this complex legislation without allowing refugees, churches and other concerned groups adequate opportunities to reflect and to share their concerns."

Another note of caution has been sounded by lawyers who think that trying to direct immigrants to specific areas may violate the mobility-rights section of the Charter of Rights, which guarantees free movement within Canada to all its residents. But other lawyers think that a residency requirement agreed to before someone entered the country would be acceptable under the Charter.

North admits to sin of pride

...continued from p. 1

North was at the broadcast summit to present a speech about the role of Christian television in the '90s. He says he knows he is the subject of some controversy and hopes his detractors would not automatically criticize the summit as well.

North was "a good person to have at the summit," says Jim Cantelon, the president of Crossroads USA and the man who hosted the summit. "He offered the perspective of someone who has been victimized by the media."

The summit invited 100 American Christian

broadcasters to focus on Canadian-U.S. networking and on problem solving in Christian media, and to deal with issues such as the integrity of televangelism, the leadership role of Christian media in society and future planning and co-operation between various Christian networks.

"They considered the summit an overwhelming success, according to the ones who spoke with me," says Cantelon. "They asked that we call another summit next year."

The June 12-13 summit, sponsored by the American division of the Crossroads corporation, was also a good excuse for broadcasters to visit the Crossroads Christian Communications Centre, a brand-new, high-tech television facility 60 kilometres southwest of Toronto.

North's future

North asserts that he never

thought he was breaking the law as he played his part in setting up the Iran-Contra deal.

"I did some things I knew would be politically controversial and polarizing," he admits. "I even did some things I knew were wrong. But my greatest sin was pride. I am a self-made man, and like most self-made men I was too proud to reach out to other men for godly counsel."

North says he has been asked

to run for the U.S. Senate, but that he has declined to consider that option until he pays off the "enormous obligations" he incurred at the trial.

"I feel there is a need for people in Washington who can admit mistakes," he says, "but I would never get into politics unless all five members of my family voted in favour of the idea first."

Women may preach but don't call it that

...continued from p. 1

women's gifts "to the fullest possible extent."

Pastor delegate Paul De Vries from Classis Hackensack expressed during the debate on the issue what many women felt afterwards: "Usually I'm in favour of taking what we can get, but this is patronizing to women. It just won't work. We should let our yes be yes and our no be no."

Sixteen-year-old audience member Megan Dengerink of Grand Rapids reacted by saying, "I think it's ridiculous. They should have passed it years ago. I've decided I'm not making profession of faith in the CRC until this is ratified — and I haven't done it yet."

Power to expound

Though women will now be allowed to preach under the supervision of their elders, synod didn't want to call it "preaching." Nor would they call it "exhorting." The former implies ordained proclamation in the CRC lexicon; the latter, proclamation (by a male) who is licensed by his classis. So synod used the word "expound" to describe formal Gospel proclamation by women.

Five women seminary students reacting to the decision were not immediately impressed with the new powers synod has granted women. "This makes us — or rather keeps us — second class citizens," was their consensus. "This makes a mockery of ordination."

However, Rev. Jack Vos of Classis Niagara, who strongly supported the compromise, is still convinced that "if there's a measure of enthusiasm within the church for this, it will work."

Need for standards

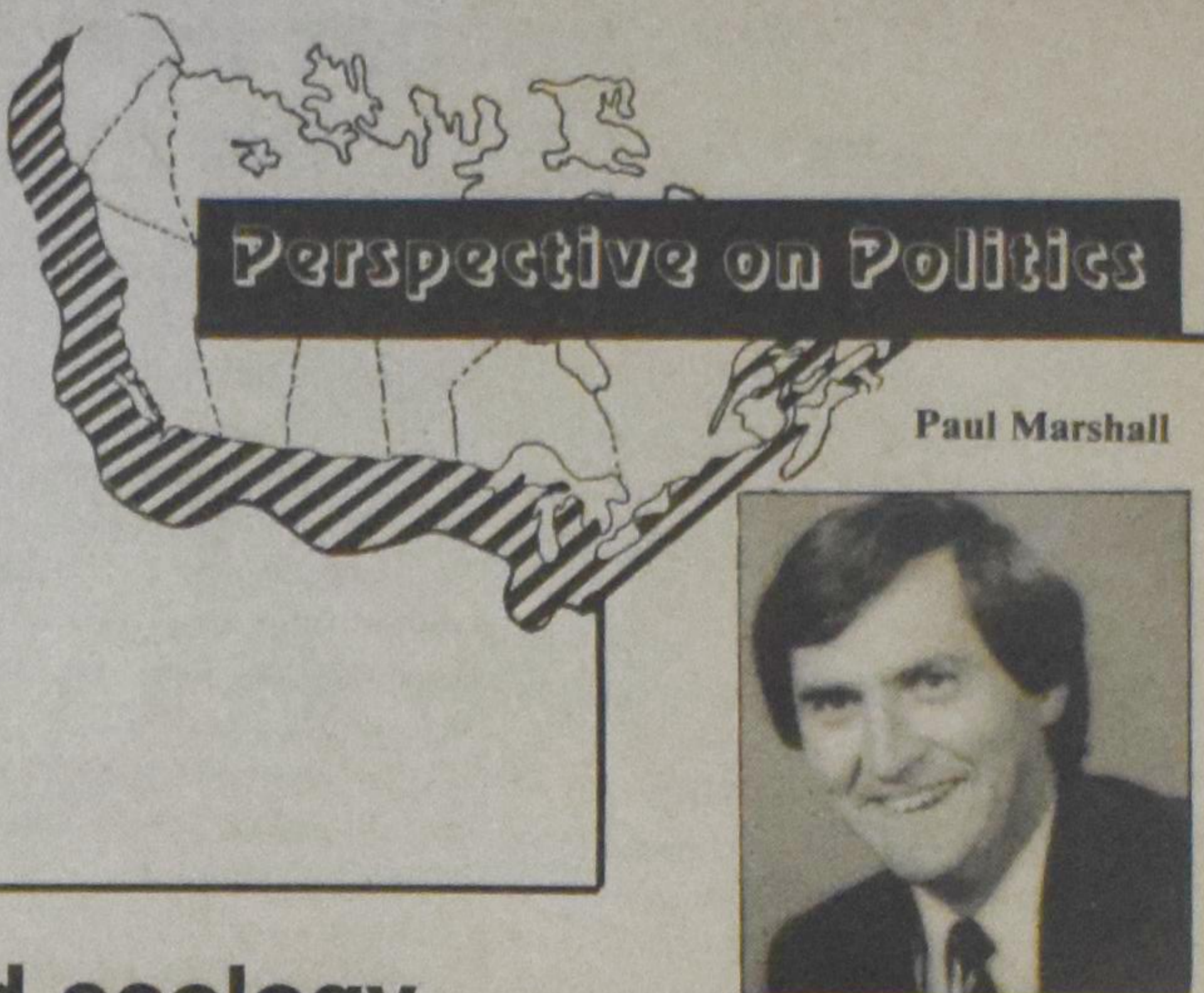
Many on both sides of the issue were heard to say that it "leaves things wide open." Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen (Classis Muskegon), an avid proponent of ordaining women, says that the resolution "will encourage congregationalism. Every church will do whatever it wants."

Vos agreed that "some kind of standardization will be necessary," and Calvin seminary president James De Jong has already assured synod that the seminary will look at putting in place some sort of "certification" for women who wish to "expound."

Jack Vos acknowledges that "no matter what we would have decided someone was going to feel pain. I know the pain is being more keenly felt right now by women." Vos asserts that he is hurting with and for those women.

There's a fundamental problem at the heart of all this, says Vos. "We never addressed how men and women relate to each other — in marriage, in families, in the church — and until we do that, this problem won't go away, no matter what synod decides."

(For more on this and on Synod 1992, see pp. 8, 9).



Paul Marshall

Abortion and ecology

I have no figures to back me up but it is my clear impression that a large number of convinced environmentalists are "pro-choice" in the matter of abortion. No doubt there are exceptions, but the association is real. Both positions have a certain trendy or "progressive" air. To use the American expression that we have imported, they are both seen as "liberal" viewpoints.

To put it cruelly, we can picture people who denounce the killing of baby seals, but who regard the killing of human offspring as a purely personal matter.

These two views are contradictory. The contradiction is not just in superficial images, suitable material for opponents' cartoons and slogans. It is one that cuts to the foundation of both positions and that shows their roots in fundamentally different visions of life.

Deeper than self-preservation

It is possible to argue for care for the environment solely on the grounds of human self-preservation that unless we do something about the "greenhouse effect" or the Amazon forests or the ozone layer, we will kill ourselves. This is certainly a powerful argument and one we should heed. But it doesn't necessarily say anything about the care of elephants or whales, or garbage recycling or general pollution.

Any thoughtful commitment to the environment must go deeper than self-preservation. It needs to recognize that the world we have been given and in which we live has an order that is inherently good and which must be respected for its own sake. Why try to save whales unless you believe that it is basically good that there be whales? Why worry about the extermination of a species unless you believe that it is right that the species be here?

As Christians we believe in such a world. The cosmos did not come into being by chance: the animals and plants and mountains are not purely arbitrary happenings, of no meaning or worth. They, and we, are created by God. When God created them, he saw that they were good (Gen. 1: 31). They are to be loved and cared for by us just as God loves and cares for them. This is why (to put it too simply) Christians should be convinced

environmentalists. The world is not there *only* for human use, though we can certainly use it (Gen. 1: 29). It has its own worth and integrity.

And God saw it was good

I'm not suggesting that Christians are the only people who believe in such worth. Others believe in the goodness of the natural order, sometimes even on quasi-pantheistic grounds. What I am saying is that environmental concern has to be rooted in a view of the basic goodness of the creation.

Consider now the question of abortion. Whatever else abortion may be, it is clearly a radical interruption of biological processes. It places human will, human choice and human desire above the development of a child. Sometimes this could be justified. But we should be in no doubt about what it is.

What should an environmentalist make of this? Clearly if it were a wolf being killed, or a valley being flooded, there would be calls for the procedure to be halted, or at least be subject to some sort of inquiry to see whether it is really needed.

Paired concerns

But what no consistent environmentalist can do is then turn round and claim that human life and its destruction is of no account, or is purely personal. That would simply dismiss the idea of a created order (or a "natural order") entirely. Any consistent environmentalist has to be deeply concerned about present and future human life as well as the lives of other creatures.

Next time we hear someone speak of protecting the earth for our unborn children, we should urge them also to be concerned for particular unborn children. And next time someone is concerned about abortion we should urge them to be concerned for the world in which that child will come to live. We have duties to future generations on both accounts.

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Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl



Pressreview

Again the constitutional circus ground to a screeching halt. Bring on the premiers, says Bob Rae. Joe Clark half in a trance from fatigue says that there is hope. This is what I say:

Who stands on guard for thee
who rends your harmony
oh home and native land?
The cause of your
decomposition
is in every two-bit politician!

★ ★ ★

Every province is trying to cut down on the cost of health care. Preston the Reformer, who was in Ontario where the press paid less attention to him than to the mating season of humming birds, wants user fees and insurance premiums. British Columbia wants doctors to be more economical with laboratory tests. Quebec's

Health and Social Services Minister Marc-Yvan Cote came up with the best analysis of the difficulty when he said: "poverty produces high health and welfare bills." Right on Marc!

★ ★ ★

Negotiations for the North American Free Trade Treaty are in an advanced phase. Trade Minister Wilson expects the three-way deal to be signed and sealed within weeks. The current two-way U.S.-Canada treaty certainly has not eliminated trade disputes. The Yankees throw import duties around as if they were free nuts at your friendly neighbourhood bar. Ask the lumber people in British Columbia, or the Honda manufacturers in Ontario to mention only two.

Laden with the weight of obsolete political theory, the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers Union guided its members into a strike in B.C. Who shall deliver us from the Marxist class struggle nonsense?

★ ★ ★

The *Catholic Chronicle* in Toledo, Ohio headlined: "Bishop Donovan Dies." Directly underneath was: "Had a clear vision of what the church wanted him to do." And when the Rev. Bob Thompson returned to the pulpit of his congregation in Toronto after recuperating from heart surgery, the choir's anthem was: "Let not your heart be troubled."

★ ★ ★

Any time now we may expect the phone wars to start. Ma Bell's monopoly is no more. She will have to face competition.

★ ★ ★

The International Court of Arbitration settled our fishing dispute with France and even Federal Fisheries Minister John Crosbie was satisfied with the result. Fishermen from St. Pierre and Miquelon are left with only a small strip of ocean to fish in.

That stone of national offense — MPs' pensions — will be reviewed by a non-parliamentary committee, and a hip-hip-hurrah for Ontario's Divisional Court which upheld a ruling by the province's Human Rights Commission that a mandatory retirement age of 60 for members of the Stratford police force violates the Human Rights Code.

★ ★ ★

This past week as I drove from Michigan to Ontario, I kept listening to comments about the Earth Summit by way of car radio. When I had passed the Blue Water bridge in Sarnia I switched to C.B.C. I noticed a marked change in the evaluation of President Bush's contribution to that summit. The Michigan station praised him for defending the American workers and the Canadian commentator painted him as a snake in paradise: Bush versus the

planet.

The Earth Summit was unable to deal with one of the earth's biggest problems: population growth. The summit itself, by the way, consumed paper that represented the sacrifice of a small forest.

★ ★ ★

Boris Yeltsin, hat in hand, will put the touch on America's generosity this week. He needs everything from money to mousetraps and from medicines to marshmallows. Has anyone heard, read, or seen the result of the election in the Philippines? They count ballots there with the speed of light.

★ ★ ★

In Italy, no temple of thrift that country, politicians have not yet been able to form a new government. They probably have to sort out who all will receive kick-backs, payoffs and bribes. That could take a long time.

U.N. spokespersons feared that the so-maniest ceasefire in Bosnia-Herzegovina will not hold and that Muslim-Croats and Serbians might soon start shooting again. Lithuanians voted in favour of a pullout of former Soviet troops from their country. I bet that was a referendum without much suspense.

And Japan's parliament, after 20 months of heated debate, gave final approval to a

controversial bill that allows the government to send troops abroad. Last time their troops went abroad they spread blood, pain and sorrow all over the world, and conquered most of the South Pacific. Now they have bought, and are still buying, large chunks of the same South Pacific.

★ ★ ★

A certain Mr. Robert Kearns invented the intermittent windshield wipers. Both Ford and Chrysler used that gizmo, but apparently without payment to Mr. Kearns. This greatly disturbed Mr. Kearns. He sought justice in the court with the result that Chrysler owes him \$11.3 million and Ford will have to come up with a cool \$10.2 million.

Wait till my invention — chewing gum dispenser in place of the car ashtray — hits the court. Do I hear 10 million? Ah well, money does not bring happiness they say. Poverty does not contribute a whole lot to it either though. Happiness really is elusive; it comes and goes like visits from your in-laws.

★ ★ ★

The same cannot be said for old age. Said some senior citizen to me: "I'm over the hill and picking up speed."

Carl Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.

Catholic bishops defend gender equality, except in the pulpit

C.C. Staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A committee of American bishops has written a pastoral letter advocating that women and men be treated equally in the home and workplace, although it would keep ordination off-limits for women.

According to journalist David Briggs, who reviewed a draft of the letter in a recent Associated Press article, the bishops want their parishioners to know that sexism is a sin. In an ideal marriage individual gifts are valued, they say, and spouses respect each other as equals before God.

"There is no hint of the superiority of men or the subordination of women" in the Bible, reads the letter written by the ad hoc committee for a pastoral response to women's concerns. At last report the committee was still going over some fine points and had not yet published a final draft.

In the letter the bishops argue that Genesis 1: 27, which reads "God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created

them, male and female he created them," is meant to be "the centrepiece of our Christian understanding of the human person."

The committee also emphasizes the example of Jesus and the apostles in rejecting the cultural understanding of their time about relations between men and women. They welcomed women as friends and disciples sharing God's work.

"To biblical scholars, it's old hat. To the people in the pew, it's not old hat," says Pheme Perkins, a professor of New Testament studies at Boston

College interviewed by Briggs in his article.



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Like a pseudo turtle moves the CRC

If I were a woman, I'd be very upset with the decision by the 1992 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to allow me to teach and "expound" the Word of God but deny me the right to be ordained as elder and minister. What synod has done is give women a task without the benefit of status and empowerment. What is ordination, after all, but to be officially sanctioned and given the support and dignity needed for a certain mandate. If ordination is not important for the doing of an elder's and pastor's task, then let no one be ordained. Let all men and women do the work of the ministry of the Gospel without ordination.

It's like asking the Queen of England to do her job without benefit of coronation. Sorry, Elizabeth, for the sake of the unity of the realm, we will not crown you Queen, but you may open Parliament and read the Christmas message to the Commonwealth nations.

No proclamation

May women preach in the Christian Reformed Church as a result of this action? No. But they may expound under the supervision of the elders. But what does that mean? Isn't preaching also done under the supervision of elders? And what does "expound" mean? The Gage dictionary on my desk says it means to "make clear; explain; interpret." To preach, on the other hand, carries the meaning to "proclaim; urge; recommend." I hope women who will be "certified" to expound will know the difference.

Make sure you do not say, "Thus says the Lord" because then you will be proclaiming. Only ordained men can say that. Don't urge a certain course of action on people. Your task is to explain and interpret by saying: "This is what it means, but I'm not sure the Lord has said it, and, congregation, it's up to you whether or not you want to apply the message." While you *expound*, make sure you don't *pound* the lectern. That privilege belongs only to ordained men.

There shall be no winners

But I'm not a woman. I'm a man. And I understand all too well the kind of manoeuvring that has led Synod '92 to come up with a compromise decision.

It's very similar to what's happening in Canada these days regarding the issue of a reworked Constitution. Just listen to Joe Clark. He will tell you that in order for Canada to stay together, there must be no winners. Everybody must lose. Was Joe Clark at synod? I can understand that a secular society has to resort to bargaining, but can the Christian church not take a stand on principle?

The compromise decision at synod guarantees that there are no winners. The conservatives are unhappy because this decision does not solve their problem of following Paul's instruction to Timothy: "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man;

she must be silent" (I Timothy 2: 12). In the mind of conservatives, this synod satisfied only half of that command. (Of course, conservatives have a problem of consistency too at this point since they do allow women to teach on the mission fields and in church schools).

The pro-women-in-office people are unhappy because women have been paternalistically delegated to a special and lesser category of ministry. Not that it is bad that nobody feels like a winner, but where is the principle for this new action?

If I were a woman I would find it hard to forget that it was a body of men that decided that I could expound but not preach. Women were not even consulted on this specific mandate. If 1990 was a Spirit-led synod, as many of us believed, what was this synod? I wish the Spirit would make up our minds.

Taking the long view

I can respect the idea that the Christian Reformed Church is not ready for the ordination of women. If we take a historical view of the matter then we can say that the church has been without ordained women for 20 centuries. That in itself did not disqualify her from being the Bride of Christ. But I have no doubt that the Spirit of Christ is leading the church into a full participation of all its members, male and female. Slowly on, the cultural baggage of male domination will fall away also in the church. When the church is ready for that will differ for each congregation.

So if the church is not ready for it, would it not have been better then not to ratify the decision of 1990 to ordain women as elder and minister *and to leave it at that*? This in-between category of pseudo-pastorate is an insult to all those capable and spiritually qualified women who are ready to assume a pastorate or eldership in the Christian Reformed Church.

Who's being unreasonable?

It would have been even better if synod had ratified 1990. After all, that decision would still have left each congregation the freedom to implement or not implement that decision. Who could accuse anyone of forcing the issue if ratification had taken place? If conservative churches feel the need to leave the CRC because other churches do not wish to be bound by their consciences, then they must bear the responsibility for that.

But it looks as if the CRC is stuck with a neither fish-nor-fowl decision. Being chicken doesn't look good on the Church of Christ which has always prided itself on seeing itself in the sign of the fish. I can only hope that women in our midst will once again graciously show that God saved the best for the last when he finally made Eve after discovering how much he could improve on the design after he had made Adam. Please, women in the CRC, forgive the delegates to Synod '92. They are only men.

BW

Letters

God covered our nakedness; so should we

It made me very sad to read the question and answer page of Peter and Marja in C.C. of May 8, concerning two married couples spending a day in a nudist camp. And then all the idle words that were spent to answer their question! The answer should have been: "No, No." What are married couples seeking in a nudist camp? And mothers, are you going to tell your children how nice it is to walk around naked?

Don't you know that we live in a world of rape and sexual abuse? And you were not sure whether or not it was sin? Then you have answered your own question. The Bible clearly tells us that if we doubt we do not act in faith and so it is sin.

Furthermore, the Lord clothed our first parents, Adam and Eve because of sin, and he was not pleased with the nakedness of Noah. David's lust was aroused when he saw Bathsheba naked.

Besides, do we look forward to being naked? No, we long to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. I know this is symbolic, but it is nevertheless longing for the covering of our shame.

What company do you enjoy in a nudist camp? Do you read the Bible and sing praises to the Lord? Would you have liked it if the Lord Jesus had just

met you there to visit you? We as Christians had better humble ourselves and pray for revival and ask for forgiveness. We have become masters in reading only what we like in the Bible. We do not heed God's warning.

We confess that Jesus Christ is the same today, yesterday and forever, and we believe in the inspired word of God, don't we? Well, the Bible has lots to say about clothes, yet we have wandered far away from God's laws. For example, the Bible says that a woman dressed in men's clothes is an abomination to the Lord. Is that not true anymore today? What about long hair and wearing a hat to church? I am sorry, I am old-fashioned, or?

A pastor friend of mine in Holland put it boldly in the church bulletin: "I hope the ladies know how to dress as they come to church." I think we need more of this boldness today, because it is the Lord's command.

I am not condemning the work of Peter and Marja, but I hope they will in the future have the courage to call a spade a spade and correct foolishness in a Christian weekly.

**F.M. Van Westenbrugge,
Lethbridge, Alta.**

What God ordains is always right?

Thank you for the editorial "The senselessness and the hurt of violence against young women," (May 22). Thank you especially for the way you dealt with the question "Where was God?"

I've never known the French family, and yet this particular incident of Kristen's abduction and murder hit me very hard. Trying to relate this happening to the providence of God proved almost impossible.

There is a song in the new Psalter Hymnal of the Christian Reformed Church in which each stanza begins with the line "What God ordains is always right." I have been to a cemetery in Holland where the executed people of the Dutch resistance during the Second World War are buried. I saw the first two lines of the same song in Dutch on a tombstone. I have a hard time relating these lines to senseless deaths.

Those who are familiar with C.S. Lewis' book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* will remember how Lewis writes about the quietness that comes after you have cried and cried till there are no tears left. The girls experienced this as they sat huddled against the dead body of Aslan and contemplated how goodness was trampled into the mud by

evil.

Deep down we realize that this cannot be the final answer. Enveloped by a fog of uncertainty we reach for the Bible and read what Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote: "All things work together for good to them that love God." All things? Even the fate that befell Kristen French? Even (Dear God, it almost turns my stomach) those things that befell her during the days that she was held captive by her abductor?

I turn to God in prayer. "Dear God, help me to realize that you were there when she had to go through that deep valley. Help me to realize that you carried her all the way and that you were much closer to her than anybody else was. Help me to realize that you will wrest even this happening out of Satan's hand and turn it to good."

And then I think of that great future that awaits us, described by John in Revelation 21: 4 where John hears a great voice out of heaven saying, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

**Bert Rhebergen,
Hamilton, Ont.**



P.S. Walter

Two months ago I wrote a column entitled "Letting Go." It essentially constituted a plea to those who are in community leadership positions to step down or aside and enable the younger generation to become directly involved in decision-making. In response to that column, an elderly gentleman in my church approached me to declare that I had really only addressed one side of the issue. With his name once again appearing on the nomination list for elders he felt that it was time that the community learned to "let go" of its elderly leaders. In his words: "Seventy-year-old men should not be elders." This column is the result of my musings on that statement.

Should there be a communally accepted retirement age for the services of the elderly? My stepmother was a masterful seamstress and needlepoint craftswoman. Her tapestries hang proudly in many Hamilton, Ont., homes as evidence of fundraising efforts for church and school. At age 78 she made regular trips to Shalom Manor where she mended and stitched for those who could no longer do so. Had she been required to retire at age 70 from utilizing her gifts in service to the community, there would be a lot fewer bandages to wrap around the leprosy stumps in Africa.

Radical change

At age 79 she fell down the stairs, broke nine ribs, sat in a semiconscious stupor with a head wound for some hours, and ended up being unable to live any longer in her house. She moved into Shalom Manor and her handicraft skills terminated. The knitting/embroidery bag stood beside her chair for years, untouched. Her eyes, which had for most of her life been focused on minute cross stitches through a magnifying loop, now scan the pages of the stacks of books on her table. The books appear and disappear and she cannot recall nor reconstruct the plot of any story line. Whenever I visit, I grope for points of conversational contact and interest, but I am unable to penetrate her wish for noninvolvement to discover what it is that gives meaning to her life now. And I often leave with this thought: "Why don't we challenge the elderly to continue to utilize their gifts?"

In *A Bed by the Window* Scott Peck has one of the caregivers in a nursing home state that: "We don't expect anything from the patients here Sometimes it can be a great relief, in the last years of a long life, to come to a place where nothing is expected of you anymore. It can be a kind of sanctuary." In Peck's narrative, this kind of freedom liberates the elderly to become the self-aware, self-confident, responsible, wise and caring individuals they were intended to be. Unfortunately, in the real world it does not work that way for many.

No retirement from community service

If mandatory retirement in the world of work creates crises in senior citizens' lives, the level of stress would be that much higher if such a retirement were accompanied with a retirement from community service. When people finally have the time and the freedom to develop their gifts in their communities, we should dismiss them as too old? Not until they cart me away as a raving madwoman!

I will concede that both individuals and communities have to be sensitively attuned to each other to recognize when the time has come to say, "Enough." But then, it may be incumbent upon the community to search for alternative ways of service.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis is assistant professor of education and psychology at The King's College in Edmonton.

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Letter

The King's College researcher clarifies two points

I appreciated the "faithfulness" which Bill Fledderus exhibited in his article on my research (C.C. June 5, p. 16), but I wish to clarify a few things which I tend to take for granted in my research which your readers may not.

First, the article states that there are Natives and then there are non-Native Christians, implying perhaps that there are no Native Christians. In point of fact, there are many Native Christians (the majority of whom are Roman Catholic due largely to their very "successful" early missionizing concerns and efforts) who are concerned for the physical and spiritual welfare of their peoples.

I put quotation marks around the word *successful* here because there continue to be deep concerns among Natives regarding the question of the relationship between Native peoples and Christianity. Many Natives are thankful for their relationship with Christ and for the positive contributions and support they and their people have received

(and continue to receive) from missionaries, church representatives and "regular" Christians, while other Natives are highly critical of the condemning, abusive role played by Christians and their churches in the lives of Native peoples.

I think we have to be humble enough to acknowledge the legitimacy of both responses and with contrite hearts ask God and our Native sisters and brothers what we can do to heal and help the hurts which have developed out of the very "unChristian" aspects of much of our relationship. This relates to my second point of clarification.

Two kinds of offenses

I believe that it is important for us to distinguish between the observable, institutionalized churches that many of us Christians at one time or another have a love/hate relationship with, and the "mystical body of Christ" that each of us is a part of by virtue of our faith response as individuals to God's revelation in Jesus

Christ. If we don't distinguish between the two, it muddles things for us.

For example, early missionaries in Canada were given responsibility by their churches and/or denomination to take "the gospel of God's love in Jesus" to Native Indians all across Canada. Blended with their "gospel intent and activity" were motives and actions which contributed to abuse and unnecessary offense. Some of this included lobbying governments to have Native ceremonies criminalized and severely punishing Native children for speaking their

native languages in residential schools.

Many colonizing Christians were concerned to see Canada become a "land for Christ," (and many of us still have this vision). But as numerous church officials and lay members are now acknowledging, the "offense" that the apostle Paul says the gospel will cause is *not* the offense that we in our more misguided efforts often cause "in the name of Christ." Though I recognize we have to be careful in separating the two, I see a potentially creative tension working between the "observable and

they mystical" bodies of Christ as we learn to see and welcome the ways in which God works in us, with us and through us to further his Kingdom.

In the article by Bill Fledderus, my comments on "the Church" are for the most part in reference to the highly structured, institutionalized organizations with those terribly uncomfortable pews. I hope and trust that anything left unsaid in the article by virtue of my taking things for granted did not cause undue offense.

David Long,
The King's College,
Edmonton, Alta.

News

Ontario could allow 'granny flats'

TORONTO (OMH Release) — Draft legislation recently released in Ontario would allow homeowners to create an apartment in their house and garden suites or "granny flats" in their yards.

"Granny flats and apartments in houses respond to the very real need for more affordable housing in Ontario," says provincial housing minister Evelyn Gigantes. "Granny flats are an innovative and compassionate way for people to care for elderly relatives. They promote independence in a supportive

and familiar place."

Apartments in houses can help first-time home buyers and cash-strapped homeowners pay the bills. They also provide much-needed jobs for the construction and renovation industry.

"There are approximately 100,000 of these apartments across Ontario right now," says Gigantes. "This legislation is also designed to make sure tenants in these apartments are living in safe, healthy homes."

The draft legislation would make the creation of an

apartment in a house a "permitted use" under local zoning and other by-laws. The apartment would be a private, self-contained accommodation with its own kitchen and bathroom and it could be created anywhere in the house: the basement, the attic or on any floor.

The legislation includes draft regulations that set reasonable health and safety standards to protect tenants. It also makes it easier for municipalities to conduct inspections to ensure these standards are being met.

"Allowing homeowners to add an apartment to their house is the cheapest and quickest way to provide new, low-cost housing," said Municipal Affairs Minister Dave Cooke. "It is important that our laws encourage the creation of a wide range of housing choices."

Cooke encouraged municipalities to lend their expertise and experience by responding to the draft legislation. People can make written submissions until August 31, 1992, before the bill is introduced in the fall session of the Legislature.



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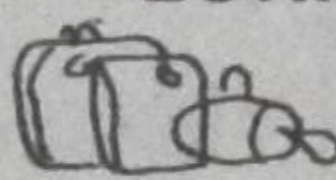


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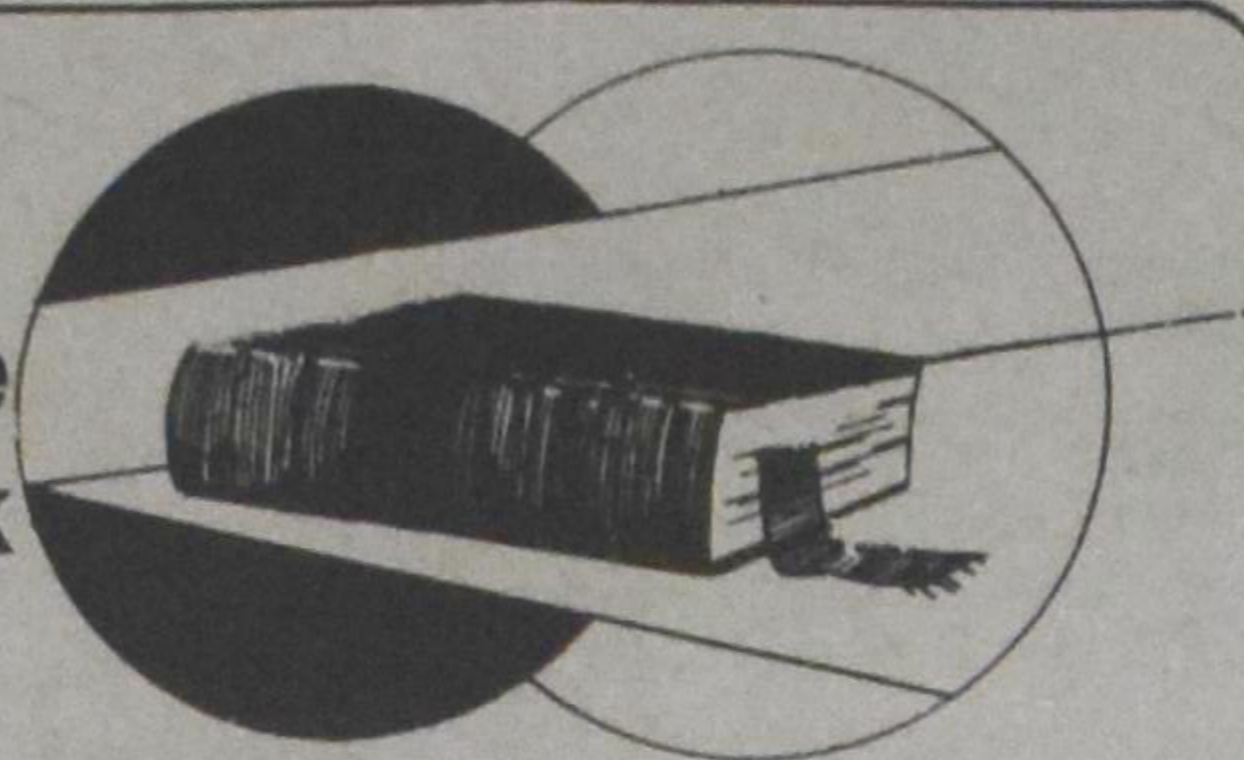
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Bible Notebook

Al Wolters



God's artistry in the womb

"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body" (Psalm 139: 15-16a, NIV).

The Bible often speaks of the unborn child as a person that God already knows, chooses and loves. It also makes clear that we are God's workmanship even when we're in our mother's womb. One passage which makes this clear is Psalm 139. Just previous to the lines we have quoted we find the familiar verses 13 and 14:

For you created my inmost being;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

There is one aspect of this artistry of God that does not come out very clearly in English translation. It is the image conveyed by the verb which is translated "woven together" in verse 15, since this refers to a special kind of weaving. Other English translations of this verse have "curiously wrought" (KJV), "intricately wrought" (RSV), "patterned" (NEB), "knitted together" (JB), "carefully put together" (TEV), and "intricately woven" (NRSV). What are all these different renderings trying to express?

A Hebrew root

The Hebrew verb which the psalmist uses is *ruqqamti*, from the root *RQM*. It is a peculiarity of the Hebrew language that meaning is conveyed by certain roots, usually consisting of three consonants, which can be modified by adding vowels, prefixes and suffixes, or by doubling, to form verbs and adjectives and nouns related in meaning to the basic meaning of the root.

The meaning of the root *RQM*, which is modified to the verbal form *ruqqamti* in our verse, is "variegate" or "weave" coloured fabric." It refers to the craft in which an intricate pattern is woven into cloth through the use of different coloured threads, not unlike embroidery. The person who is skilled at this is called a *roqem*. We find such a craftsman mentioned in Exodus 38: 23, where Oholiab, one of the artists involved in making the tabernacle, is described as "a craftsman and designer, and an embroiderer (*roqem*) in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen" (NIV). See also Exodus 35: 35. The product of such a person's art was called *rigma* in Hebrew, meaning "fabric of (a variety of) colours." We find this word used in Ezek. 16: 10, where the NIV translates it as "embroidered dress." In the next chapter we find the same word used metaphorically to describe the feathers of a great eagle, and it is there translated "plumage of varied colours" (Ezek. 17: 3).

God the embroiderer

In Psalm 139: 15, therefore, an unborn baby is being pictured as a *rigma*, a beautifully designed and colourfully patterned work of the weaver's art; and God by implication is being pictured as the great *Roqem*, the divine Embroiderer who personally makes sure that this masterpiece of his creative art takes shape in the mother's womb.

In this way God accommodates himself to our understanding in order to make clear who he is and how he works in our lives. Theologians sometimes use the big word "anthropomorphism" for this kind of accommodation, but we do not need such terms to understand what is going on here. God uses the language of human art and craftsmanship to make clear to us that a baby in the womb is a showpiece of divine wisdom and power. Such a baby is a reason for wonderment and praise and thanksgiving.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Presbyterian assembly upholds marriage, condemns homosexual union

Robert J. Bernhardt

The 118th annual General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada met in Hamilton, Ont., from June 7-12. Placed before the assembly were the usual variety and volume of recommendations. These covered everything from internal administrative policy to the denomination's position on doctrinal and social justice issues.

The assembly brings together representatives from the 45 regional presbyteries across Canada. The presbyteries, which vary considerably in geographical size and membership, have representation on the basis of one minister for every six on their roll. The ministers are then balanced by an equal number of ruling elders. The result is an assembly of some 250 people who can usually be expected to be representative of the opinions of the denomination.

As is frequently the case, one or two items are seen to be of preeminent significance. This year a major report on human sexuality claimed special attention.

The Committee on Church Doctrine, in response to a request from the Presbytery of Westminster in 1987, had been asked to prepare a report on human sexuality. The Presbytery of Westminster had asked the church to "produce a statement defining the Church's position on human sexuality, and our understanding of the moral and spiritual values implicit in our sexuality." In the intervening years several other requests from presbyteries and congregations in a similar vein have been referred to the same committee.

The resulting major report (over 15 pages in length) is by far the most extensive report on this topic ever prepared by the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The report, which begins with a statement on "The Authority and Sources for Christian Faith and Life" and which incorporates historical and exegetical material, goes on to formulate statements on marriage, homosexual relationships and singleness. The report concludes by addressing the issues of cohabitation, sexual violence, church leaders and sexual responsibility, HIV infection and sexually transmitted diseases.

Sanctity of marriage affirmed

The report was seen to be a reaffirmation of the church's commitment to the sanctity of marriage. Its declaration that "Scripture portrays marriage as the proper context for the expression in sexual intercourse of humanity's sexual longings" is a fair summary of its conclusions.

While the mood of the assembly seemed to strongly support the report, not all commissioners concurred. There were some who obviously were uncomfortable about the report's implications for homosexuals. On the basis

of its study the report concluded that there are "no biblical passages which appear to approve of homosexual genital relations."

However the report was anxious to distinguish between homosexual orientation and homosexual activity. Acknowledging that there are varying opinions as to whether or not we have a choice about our sexual orientation, the report emphasized that "we do have choices to make about our sexual behaviour."

"The conclusion which the report therefore reached was that "homosexual practice is not an alternative lifestyle to heterosexual union but contrary to what we understand as God's will, from our study of Scripture." While the report acknowledges that though this conclusion may seem unfair in that it restricts the desired sexual expression of some, such sexual expression is not essential to human fulfillment and psychological health.

Caring for each other

At several points in the report stress is placed upon the need for tenderness, compassion and pastoral care. While the report concludes that "our standards cannot be ignored," it is prompt to declare that "the truth must always be spoken in love." There is a strong pastoral call which if heeded, would guard the church from homophobia: "the church must listen to and share the very real pain homosexuals and their families have had to face."

There is no suggestion that homosexuals are to be excluded from the church community but the report explicitly states that "all church members, heterosexual or homosexual, have a pastoral responsibility to deal lovingly with each other, to learn from each other, to serve with each other and to bear one another's burdens."

This report was not distributed in the church even in draft form prior to its being presented. Indeed the intention was to allow only those who were actually commissioners to see it in advance of assembly. This failed however and material from the report was published in the press prior to the opening of assembly.

Anticipate endorsement

There was in the assembly widespread agreement that the report should be released to the broader membership of the church before it was finally adopted. However there was a concern that there be some indication of this assembly's response to the report. The debate in the assembly focused around the element.

Those who opposed the conclusions of the report saw no hope of defeating it but attempted to send it down to presbyteries and sessions without any comment. However, the resolution finally adopted was that "the report be adopted as an interim report" and that it be sent to presbyteries and sessions for their study and comment.

This action guarantees that the topic will be back before the next general assembly. Although, if there is extensive and varied comment from across the church there may be some difficulty in having the necessary revisions completed in time for the next assembly. While there is certain to be some variety in the responses that will be received a number of commissioners privately expressed the opinion that the conclusions of the report would be strongly endorsed by the broader membership of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Robert Bernhardt is pastor of Chalmers Presbyterian Church of Hamilton, Ont.

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Christian Reformed Synod 1992

Women's pain expressed in protest vigil on synod floor

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — When the 184 male delegates of the Christian Reformed Church synod came back from lunch on Thursday, June 18, they found more than 225 women, some children and a few men occupying their seats and the surrounding area. One woman, Kristy Vander Stelt, occupied the chair of her father, Mel Wieringa, a delegate from Classis Grandville. Some other women took the seats of delegates from their own classes.

For about 25 minutes before synod sessions were to resume at 1:30 p.m. the women quietly held lighted candles and sang hymns such as "Kum ba ya," "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" and "Glorify Your Name." Because electricity had been knocked out the night before by a severe thunderstorm, only a limited number of the auditorium's lights were on, fed by a college generator. The resulting semi-darkness made the candles appear particularly bright.

As delegates filed in, a number of them joined the singing and a few took to the stage with the women.

Precisely at 1:30 the group on stage began to file out while singing "We Shall Overcome."

Stand in our shoes

Carol Roeda, whose husband Jack was a pastor delegate for Classis Grand Rapids East, was the event's main organizer. It grew out of a discussion the night before with her husband and several women friends.

"We wanted to make a powerful visual statement," says Carol. "We've been seeing only men up there for years, but they haven't had a chance to see what that [a sex-segregated group] looks like. Now they could see they're making decisions for faces, for people, not just abstractly."

Another spokesperson for the group, Charlotte Ellison of Grand Rapids, explained, "We had to give expression to women's pain, which is enormous. Nothing in this compromise does that. It was a dog's breakfast. Women have to start from the point of naming their pain and then move on from there to going out and proclaiming the Word and following the Gospel."

Many delegates were deeply moved by the vigil. Rev. Duane

Kelderman, also from Grand Rapids East, asked President Howard Vanderwell to pause for a moment so delegates could reflect on what they'd just seen and experienced. "We can't just go on with 'business as usual,'" he said.

The power of weakness

Kelderman then referred to remarks made the day before by elder Ted Minnema from Classis Thornapple Valley about being "wounded healers" — being willing to approach issues from a position of weakness and vulnerability — rather than rational, "doctrinal defenders," an approach which Minnema had said allows for only winners and losers.

Kelderman asserted, "We've seen a test to that redemptive power of weakness. I hope we all see this as something painfully beautiful. We didn't see people saying they're going to leave the church, or they'll withhold quota money; or using abusive language to get their point across." Minnema himself then concluded that the "communication beyond words" that they had just seen is a crucial form of communication and one that



Photo: Marian Van Til

Two generations of women meet to observe what synod would say about how they may use their gifts in the church.

allows emotions, affections, and spirituality to be communicated.

Not everyone felt that way, however. Elder delegate Vic Vander Molen from Classis Huron rose angrily after Kelderman and Minnema had spoken, wanting to debate the issue. But President Vanderwell was in no mood for that. He ruled Vander Molen out of order. The elder insisted on speaking.

"I'll have to leave," he threatened.

"Don't do that," answered

Vanderwell wearily.

"I will," Vander Molen insisted, and Vanderwell let him have his way. "This was a protest," Vander Molen asserted, implying that protests are inherently wrong. "We made this decision yesterday and a lot of us had to stretch to do it. I did. And now these women are saying, 'We want all or we want nothing.'"

Vander Molen sat down and after a moment of awkward silence, synod went on with its remaining business.

No to ordination; Yes to gifts: Anatomy of a compromise

Marian Van Til

Many Christian Reformed Church members across the opinion spectrum looked expectantly to their denomination's synod this year to see whether it would ratify Synod 1990's decision to allow women to be ordained as elders and ministers.

A decision not to ratify would cause severe pain for the women who feel called to pastoral ministry, and for the many, female and male, who support them. A decision to

ratify would have the same effect on the many who believe the Bible simply does not allow for ordaining women.

Everyone knew ahead of time, given the paradigm within which the 20-year-old debate has been set, that one group would come out feeling like losers.

But no one could have predicted the solution which synod actually adopted, or that both groups would feel like losers. And the committee that forged that compromise seemed genuinely surprised at

the negative response being heard from both sides.

Synod said, on that committee's advice: don't allow women to be ordained but allow them to "make use of their gifts" by engaging in pastoral care, expounding the Word (that is, preaching), and virtually any other of the tasks in which male officebearers engage. (See front-page story and editorial on p. 4).

A spirit of camaraderie

Synod's advice committee on the matter was made up of men on both sides of the issue, though by several members' own admission, weighted toward the "conservative" side.

Committee reporter Rev. Gordon Pols (Classis Alberta North) explained to fellow delegates that it was the spirit of camaraderie and unity that had developed in the committee which led its majority to come up with the compromise.

Ten of the 17 members supported the compromise — though they had hoped it would be unanimous. Three members wrote their own report (Minority Report 1) which recommended that synod ratify the 1990 decision but not allow women officebearers to be delegated to classis and synod for a five-year period. Four

other members (Minority 2) were against ratification and any compromise, wanting to maintain the status quo.

A process of stretching

Pols described a process of "stretching" that he said had occurred within the committee: those from both the right and the left had moved toward the middle. He himself had come to synod ready to vote for ratification — he recounted the process of his "conversion" from opposing ordaining women to supporting it, and how he changed his mind about voting in favour of it when he concluded that the suggested compromise could help bring the unity the church is so obviously lacking.

"We believed it would help to not drive the wedge deeper," he said. "We have grown together enough as a committee to be able to stay together in one church. May that same spirit be in the denomination."

The speeches made during the debate leaned mostly toward ratification. And there seemed to be a whole block of delegates who favour ordaining women (many of whom publicly admitted it) but who voted against ratification and for the compromise. "Ratification would have passed fairly easily if all those

guys who say they support women in office had voted that way," was the opinion of Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen of Classis Muskegon.

No attempt at unity

Whatever the committee members experienced together, however, did not translate well to the synod floor or to the audience of male and female church members listening to the debate. Under the glaring lights of debate the proposed solution looked more and more like a politically motivated compromise, though committee chair Al Petroelje of Classis Grand Rapids South, expressed offense when another delegate suggested that. Petroelje saw the compromise as a serious attempt at unity which may prevent us "from continuing to bite at each other" resulting in us "devouring each other."

The committee's sincere intent, it said, was to maintain, or perhaps build, some unity in the denomination. They believed that can be done by saying No to ordination but trying to create a climate in which women's gifts, which have been ignored in the church, can begin to be exercised.

See p. 16 for more on Synod '92

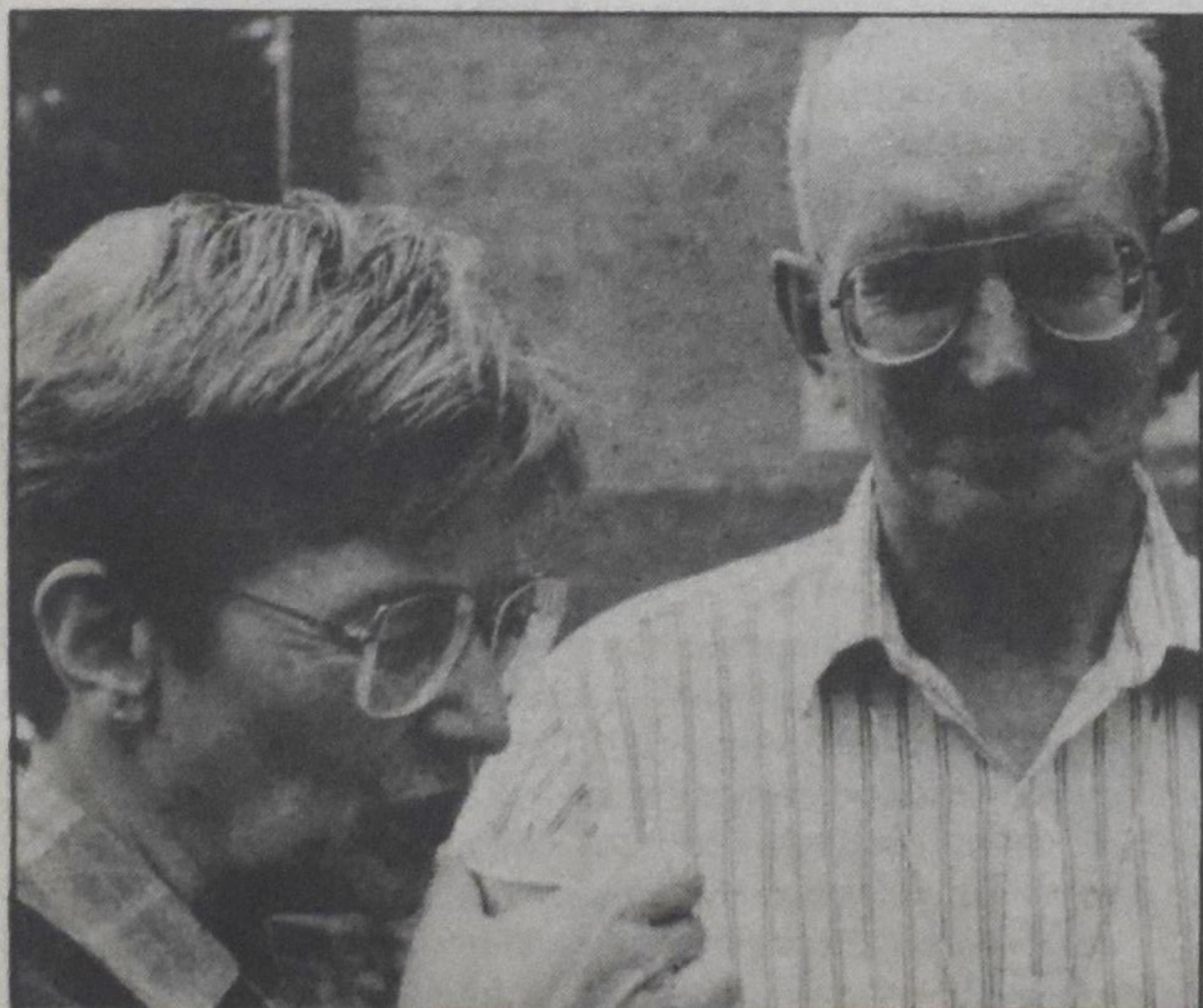


Photo: Marian Van Til

Mirth Vos from St. Catharines, Ont., felt the "compromise" on ordaining women was a bad and painful one for women. Delegate Peter Nicolai (Cl. Alberta South) agreed. "We must be sensitive to authoritarianism," he told fellow delegates. "We've reduced authority to power. This is a good time for the church to stand together, male and female, to preach the Gospel to the world."

Synod 1992



Photo: Marian Van Til

Church must work to acknowledge and prevent abuse, synod says

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — "Physical, emotional and sexual abuse is fundamentally an attack on the spirituality of its victims," observed the synod of the Christian Reformed Church last week. "The church must recognize that all such abuse is also spiritual abuse." Therefore, a ministry to the abused and abuser "must include ministering the healing, restoring mercy of the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit," synod declared.

Abuse is not just a problem; it's a "sin against the biblical directives that govern our actions and relationships, and striking evidence of the pervasive misery that has infected human life," said synod.

A 1990 professional survey of CRC members, initiated by the study committee on abuse which reported to this year's synod, indicates that 12 per cent of adult church members say they've been physically abused, 13 per cent have been sexually abused and 19 per cent have experienced emotional abuse. The "prevalence of abuse" in the denomination is 28 per cent, similar to society at large.

Breaking the silence

In conducting such a survey the Christian Reformed Church is ahead of other churches, asserted study committee member Dr. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. "As far as we know, no other denomination has yet done an abuse prevalence survey; we've gotten 200 requests for it and the report, half of which have come from other churches," she said.

For too long there has been a "wall of silence" around abuse, says the study report which synod adopted, and too often in the church victims are not believed and abusers are supported. Classis Niagara, having conducted its own study of sexual abuse, got Synod 1989 to agree to address sexual,

physical and emotional abuse denomination-wide.

Synod this year adopted (with minor changes) the report put together by a committee of seven men and women appointed in 1989. Those seven are professionals with extensive experience in dealing with abuse.

A safe haven

Synod 1992 called upon church councils to help their congregations publicly acknowledge that the sin of abuse exists among them, and then to "take positive steps to make their congregations safe for all persons."

But for congregations to properly deal with abuse they must realize that "a root cause" of abuse is "the failure

and/or inability of men and women, and adults and children, to relate to each other in a biblically healthy, affirming manner." Abuse is a "systemic disease," said Peter Nicolai, and only healthy relationships between men and women will stop it. Therefore, it is everybody's problem.

Synod urged local church councils to adopt procedures to deal "immediately and decisively" with abusers who are pastors, officebearers or others "in positions of authority or influence" so that such people cannot continue to exploit those positions.

Synod warned, though, against a local council trying to determine an alleged abuser's guilt or innocence. "This decision calls councils to adopt

procedures to respond pastorally to allegations of abuse. It is for civil courts to determine guilt or innocence," synod resolved.

Church councils must become "aware of the law and procedures applicable in their areas and inform their congregations accordingly," synod said. A congregation should also create opportunities for its leaders to be educated about and sensitized to abuse issues.

Calvin Theological Seminary has agreed to consider implementing mandatory pastoral training so that future pastors are well-informed about the prevention, recognition and the need for treatment of abuse. The seminary will report

to synod next year about how it is implementing abuse education into its required curriculum.

The most controversial issue delegates discussed centred on the study committee's request that a "qualified person" be appointed for a five-year term to develop and co-ordinate a denomination-wide prevention program.

Delegates spent several hours debating whether the CRC could financially afford to hire one such person or whether a committee of volunteers could do essentially the same work.

In the end, synod voted for the committee rather than hiring a single person. That committee will report on its work to the synod of 1994.

Five members of the study committee on physical, emotional and sexual abuse: Leonard Blauwkamp (Kent Co. Mich. Dept. of Social Services), Dr. Tom Zeyl (family physician, Smithville, Ont.), Dr. Mary VanderVennen (Christian Counselling Services, Toronto), Dr. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (psychology dept., Calvin College), Rev. Peter Nicolai (pastor, Emmanuel, Calgary, and delegate from Classis Alberta South).

Synod digest

Continued on page 16...

Marian Van Til, with files by Bonny Mulder Wynia

Speaking of God as male or female

In response to a CRC Publications request that synod approve four guidelines for the type of language used to refer to God in the denomination's new church school curriculum, synod did so, with a revision.

Synod offered the guidelines as pastoral advice with regard to general usage of gender language and imagery for God: Editors should 1) make no changes in scriptural language and imagery for God; 2) reflect the rich range of imagery Scripture uses in speaking of God; 3) not offend readers needlessly by using inappropriate images, overusing masculine pronouns and/or by naming God with feminine nouns or pronouns; 4) use language that fully reflects the personal nature of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit."

Treat single young adults with dignity

A study committee told synod that more and more single young adults are dropping out of the Christian Reformed Church. In response synod discussed ways to minister more effectively to single adults without creating a new agency at the denominational level. Such ministry must begin at the congregational level, synod said.

Synod offered guidelines for ministry to single young adults, which included encouraging other church members to treat adult singles with dignity, as complete persons; developing accurate lists of adult singles; recognizing their gifts and needs; and involving them in many areas of ministry and leadership in their congregations.

Synod backs employee's appeal re: Seafarers' ministry

After meeting all Saturday morning, June 13, in executive (closed) session, synod decided to support an appeal by Gien Janssens. Janssens worked at the Seafarers' centre in Montreal — a church-run ministry — and during a time of turmoil there was fired by the board of that ministry.

Synod agreed with Janssens when she said her discharge had been unduly severe and had not been dealt with properly. Synod directed the Ministry to Seafarers to pay Janssens a part of the compensation she requested — and urged forgiveness.

Gambling, lotteries rooted in materialism

"Gambling is rooted in the soil of materialism, where it is nurtured by human greed. Yet nowhere in the Bible are we told that 'more' is necessarily 'better,'" says a report on gambling and lotteries accepted by synod. The church must "speak prophetically" to government on issues like gambling, since so many lotteries are government-run.

But Christians can also foster a "discipline of simplicity" in their personal and family lives which will combat the materialism which fosters gambling, said synod.

Synod's study report suggested 10 ways to do that: 1) buy things for their usefulness rather than for status; 2) reject anything that is producing an addiction in us; develop a habit of giving things away; 3) refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry — many gadgets waste the world's resources; 4) learn to enjoy things without owning them; 5) develop a deeper appreciation for the creation; 6) develop a healthy skepticism of all 'buy now, pay later' schemes; 7) obey Jesus' instruction about plain, honest speech; 8) reject anything that will breed oppression of others; 9) shun whatever would distract you from your main goal — Jesus said, "Seek first my kingdom and my righteousness."

Features

Blaze, Spirit, Blaze

Berta Hosmar haven't seen Allan for the past 15 minutes and I just hope he hasn't gotten into trouble again. Have you seen him?" asked Ruth. Her daughter Betty replied reassuringly, "Don't worry; he's with the girls downstairs in the family room, having the time of his life. Everybody is making a fuss over him. He has changed clothes and is wearing his suit and tie with the 10-gallon hat his parents bought him when they went out West."

Ruth rushed downstairs to take Allan, her weekend guest, away from a dozen chatting young women who were in the middle of a bridal shower. Allan was a husky young man of 26 with the mind of a young boy. He had a loving but mischievous personality. You never knew what he was up to so he needed constant supervision. He came to visit Ruth and her family several times a year when his parents needed a break.

Ruth smiled when she saw her charge. Allan must have wanted to make an impression on the girls. With his enormous hat, dark sunglasses and dressy suit, his camera slung over his shoulder, he looked comical and yet a little pathetic. Poor guy, trying so hard to be like everybody else, yet not wise enough to function independently in society. "Why don't you go to your room and listen to your tapes?" Ruth suggested. "I'll call you when lunch is ready and then you can join the girls again."

Allan obeyed reluctantly. He loved listening to his music but tonight he wanted to be part of the festivities. It wasn't fair, he mused. Here he was, all dressed up and ready for love. Betty looked so pretty tonight and all of a sudden he had known he wanted to date her and marry her. His brother was married, so now it was his turn. He didn't have his driver's license yet — his dad kept saying, "Maybe next year Allan" — but he could take Betty for a walk to the mall and buy her an ice cream. Why not ask her right now?

Obedying that sudden impulse he sneaked downstairs again, making sure Ruth didn't see him. "Come to my room, I want to tell you something," he whispered in Betty's ear.

She looked at his faithful, begging, slightly slanted eyes and decided she could spare a

few minutes. She sat down on his bed and Allan sat on the floor in front of the door, effectively blocking the entrance with his 190-pound bulk.

"OK, what's up?" she asked, but Allan did not reply. A torrent of emotions swept over him. He felt hot and cold and all mixed up and he could only stare at Betty. She saw the expression in his eyes and suddenly realized to her dismay that this lovable boy in the adult body was struggling with very normal, adult feelings. "Poor thing," was her first reaction, but then she became somewhat apprehensive.

"I won't be able to get out of this room unless he moves, so I'd better distract him," she told herself. She also knew Allan wasn't going to move unless he wanted to for he could be stubborn and could not control his anger when provoked. Fortunately she heard her mother's voice.

"Allan, what are you doing? Open the door for me, please."

"I'm his hostage," answered Betty. Allan was still staring at her and remained speechless. Not until Ruth bribed Allan with, "Let's make some popcorn" did he jolt out of his trance and get up.

Boys like Allan could not possibly take on the responsibility of marriage unless somebody were there at all times to help. Yet how normal in every other way were most of these "children," Ruth reflected when she understood what had happened. Many people still think that developmentally handicapped people are always happy because they don't worry about tomorrow. Yet many of them know they are different and grieve in their own way. The silent tears of the handicapped," Ruth thought.

"I'm going back to my room," said Allan. He felt sad and angry. He'd listen to his tapes and he would turn up the music so loud that everybody would be blasted out of this house. Why should those girls have all the fun? He also remembered that he was mad at Ken, his best friend from the sheltered workshop. Ken had called him a "retard." He should look at himself! Ken couldn't even print his own name!

Allan wished his parents were back. They'd promised him a present. He had asked for two — a T-shirt and a pizza. Thinking about food made his

mouth water and his anger disappeared; but the sadness remained.

"When you feel sad, Allan, just talk to Jesus. He loves you very much," his mom had told him.

Allan liked going to church with his parents. In his own church he had more fun than in Betty's church, for in his church you could raise your arms and clap your hands all the time.

"You belong to the Pentecostal Church," his parents had taught him. That name had something to do with the Holy Spirit. That Spirit

Holy Spirit to come in.

Allan put on his new tape and sang along with the song: "Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with your glory. Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire."

While singing his sadness disappeared and he remembered that he was special and that Jesus loved him very much. That made him feel warm and happy. Suddenly he had a beautiful plan! He would ask the Holy Spirit to come and live in his heart tonight!

He had taken some matches from the family room when nobody was looking. Tonight

to see if there was a flame.

A sudden gust of wind carried a burning paper away. That must be the storm of the Holy Spirit, Allan thought and started to look for a door in the flames.

Then, everything happened at once! A neighbour came running and threw a pail of water over his fire, and Betty's mom was suddenly beside him, angry. It was too much. Allan started to sob. Everything had gone wrong tonight.

"Tell me all about it Allan," Betty's mom suggested when he had sat down on a chair and had stopped crying. When he



looked like a dove, but on Pentecost Sunday it looked like little flames on people's heads — flames that didn't burn. The Holy Spirit also made lots of noise on Pentecost Sunday, like the howling of a storm, and it could speak lots of languages. Allan only knew English and two words in French: *Je t'aime*. His parents had told him the Holy Spirit would also live in your heart, just like Jesus, if you asked him to. Allan got things mixed up sometimes. How could two people live in one heart? That's why he had never asked the

he could use them. In the stories in his Bible storybook people sometimes made a fire on an altar when they spoke with God. That's what he would do too! He knew just the spot. Right in the corner between the garage and the house.

On tiptoes he went to the garage and found a stack of newspapers. He remembered how his dad made campfires. Carefully Allan struck a match and held it to the paper. Beautiful! "Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire," Allan sang prayerfully; and then he felt the top of his head

was finished with his story Betty's mom also had tears in her eyes. That made Allan cry again. She hugged and kissed him and that felt good.

"We must all ask the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts," she told him. "God will give you His Spirit for free if you ask him and believe in him. You don't have to build an altar first. Just remember never to use matches when you're alone."

Berta Hosmar lives in Whitby, Ont.

An apology for



Michael Jackson

video stations, always committed to the middle of the road, were worried about the response of the public. And that got them worried about the response of the corporate sponsors. So, careful to guard his reputation (and market), Jackson withdrew the final section of the video.

Brian J. Walsh

If the riots of recent weeks in Los Angeles, Toronto and other North American cities are any indication, we could be in for a long hot summer in race relations. Racial tensions are again boiling over and it is very likely that things will get worse before they get better. Oddly enough, Michael Jackson's controversial video, "Black or White," anticipated precisely this kind of a crisis.

The original video has three distinct sections. Only the first two sections remain in the version of the video which is still in circulation.

War and peace

The first section of the video is the shortest. We are given a view of the earth from space and then zoom in on a typical suburban family drama in process. Dad is watching the ball game on TV, Mom is reading a gossip magazine, and the little boy is rocking his heart out upstairs in his bedroom. Dad shouts, repeatedly, for the kid to turn off his heavy metal music and go to bed. Junior decides to retaliate by literally blowing his father half way across the world by means of one guitar chord hooked up to an incredibly large speaker turned up to the "Are you nuts?" level. End section one.

Dad lands in Africa as section two begins. In this section we have the performance of the song "Black or White" with Jackson singing and dancing with people representing African, North American aboriginal, East Indian, and Russian cultures. While these dance scenes seem more to be caricatures than serious attempts to honour various cultures, the point is nonetheless effectively made — if it doesn't matter whether you are black or white, then we can happily embrace and share a diversity of cultural heritages. As the video progresses there

are various scenes with children.

The scene then shifts to Jackson singing the chorus on top of the Statue of Liberty. In the background, however, we can see landmarks of other great cities: London, Paris, Chicago, Moscow.

Finally we encounter the most delightful images in the video. This second section closes with a series of male and female faces representing a wide variety of racial backgrounds literally melting into one another as they sing the chorus again. This is where the present video ends. The camera moves back to reveal the studio in which these last scenes were shot as the song concludes.

Offensive actions

The third section of the original video, however, takes off from where the song has just ended. A panther appears in the studio. As it walks out on to the street it is transformed via the magic of video technology into Jackson. Now comes the offensive part. With no accompanying music beyond the percussive sounds of his own tap dancing, Jackson proceeds to perform a desperately violent and autoerotic dance. For the next four minutes Jackson destroys a car both with karate chops and a crow bar. He sends a steering wheel dramatically through one window, and a garbage can through another. Throughout the dance, Jackson repeatedly fondles his crotch with clear masturbatory intent. By the end of the performance, Jackson is crouched in a puddle, ripping his shirt and screaming. He then reverts to his original panther form and walks off.

It was the violence and masturbation that caused the offense. Moms and dads did not want their young children to be exposed to this kind of a performance from a star of Jackson's stature. And rock

Assume integrity

Now what is going on here? Is this just another Coke Classic scam? Did the Jackson people know that this scandal would erupt and deliberately set up the video in such a way that they could easily drop those last four minutes or did Jackson simply go too far and quickly backtrack before he got in too much trouble? What does the third section have to do with the rest of the video? Or, for that matter, what do the three sections of the video have to do with each other? Is this a unified artistic product or a haphazard collection of three different images that are essentially unrelated? What happens if we view this video assuming that it has artistic integrity?

Let's begin with the opening scene. The theme of "Black and White" is racial harmony and overcoming racial and ethnic conflict. Yet the video begins with a conflict — one that is not racial but generational. So we begin by noticing that there is a contrast between the opening scene of generational conflict and the overall message of harmony.

"At the very least then, the video is saying that there are two options available to us: a fruitful and joyful communal racial harmony, or an isolated, angry desperate destructiveness."

But the two sections are also intentionally connected in two ways. First, the father loses this particular domestic battle by being blown out of his conflictual home and literally right into the video performance of "Black and White." It is almost as if the father has been forced to face another reality, the reality of racial diversity and harmony. And perhaps facing this reality will help him reconsider the



conflict at home.

The second connection between the two sections is, perhaps, even more profound. The very child who is caught in the midst of generational conflict at the beginning of the video now demonstrates by the interracial company he keeps and the music he performs (a white middle class kid doing rap music!) that his generation is able to transcend racial conflict.

We see, then, that the opening section of the video is indeed integral to the artistic production as a whole and to the overall message of the song.

Two options

But what do we make of the third section? If we assume the artistic integrity of Jackson, what role does this third section of the video play in the production as a whole?

As we view those four minutes we are struck by the stark contrast between the sounds and images that we met in section two compared to section three. Images of peace, harmony and community are replaced by a solitary individual engaging in acts of rampant violence and vandalism.

Scenes with children and babies (the result of human love-making) are replaced with masturbatory scenes (a metaphor of unfruitful sexual loneliness).

The connection between section two and three of the original video is the connection of deliberate contrast. At the very least then, the video is

saying that there are two options available to us: a fruitful and joyful communal racial harmony, or an isolated, angry, desperate destructiveness. And for this contrast, the last four minutes are worth it. In religious terms they set before us the radical contrast between blessing and curse, life and death with a shocking starkness. Jesus would have approved.

But there is one more visual clue to be considered — the black panther. In those last four minutes, Jackson and the black panther are one. Is there any meaning encoded in the choice of this particular creature? Could it be that Jackson is making symbolic reference here to the militant Black Panther movement of the 1960s? Could the message be that if we do not pay attention to the joyful message of the song "Black or White" then we will likely see the return of such violent black activism?

If the video means something like what I have suggested, then the exclusion of its last four minutes is to be lamented. Those four minutes are offensive. And they do cause scandal. But refusing to face those four minutes on video means that we will have to face the realities they depict on our streets. It looks like Jackson was prophetic and we didn't want to listen.

Brian J. Walsh is senior member in worldview studies at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.



Canada

Still cheering for Joe Clark and his vision for Canada

Bill Fledderus

CANADA — Joe Clark, the minister responsible for constitutional affairs, has recently been called the "Constitutional Ever-ready Rabbit — he just keeps going and going and going." The quote is a tribute to his determination and longevity as a political figure in Canada.

While he has been criss-crossing the country in the cause of constitutional renewal, Clark has delivered numerous effective speeches dealing with issues that touch the core of Canadian identity. What's more, he even sounds authoritative on the subject.

Granted, Clark is not the most dynamic speaker in the country. Granted, that for most Canadians (especially anglophones) encouraging patriotism and federal unity is a "motherhood and apple pie" issue if ever there was one. Granted that over the past months Canadians despised Prime Minister Mulroney so much that anyone would have looked good in comparison.

Yet a bit of a halo has been forming around Joe Clark's head, which cannot be explained away by saying that the media has been overlooking his bad points. Somehow his personal character and his

accomplishments have allowed Clark to become the focal point of Canadian hope for the future.

This ability to shine is not a recent phenomenon with Clark. Who would ever have believed in the 1960s that the hopelessly idealistic M.P.'s assistant from High River, Alta., could have become Prime Minister of Canada?

And when his minority government failed to survive a vote of non-confidence after its first year in office in 1980, who thought "Joe Who?" could become anything more than a question in a Canadian trivia

game: "Who was in office for the shortest amount of time, John Turner or Joe Clark?"

Who would have believed that he could become a competent minister of external affairs or even a sort of Canadian national hero?

Still a fan

I am almost embarrassed to admit it, but I have believed in Joe Clark and cheered for him from the time I was eleven years old, and he was leading the Conservatives in the 1979 national election.

For school that year, just before the election, I made a scrapbook of newspaper clippings about the various candidates and issues. For my conclusion, I wrote that I would vote for him (when I was old enough) because I believed in his administration's responsible budget.

I guess I'm still a fan of his. At least, I have found some of his recent English-language speeches inspiring (though at least part of the credit inevitably belongs to his speech-writers). I for one believe the constitutional negotiations are in good hands. And I hope that someone besides myself has been listening to some of those speeches. Here are some memorable excerpts:

"The [constitutional] process has been cumbersome and long, but you don't renew a nation in a microwave Some see people like Abraham Lincoln as heroes and Canadians like Sir John A. MacDonald as pedestrian. Yes, Lincoln was great. But he solved his problems by force. Sir John A. solved his by persuasion. That has always been the Canadian way, the better way" — Ottawa, March 31.

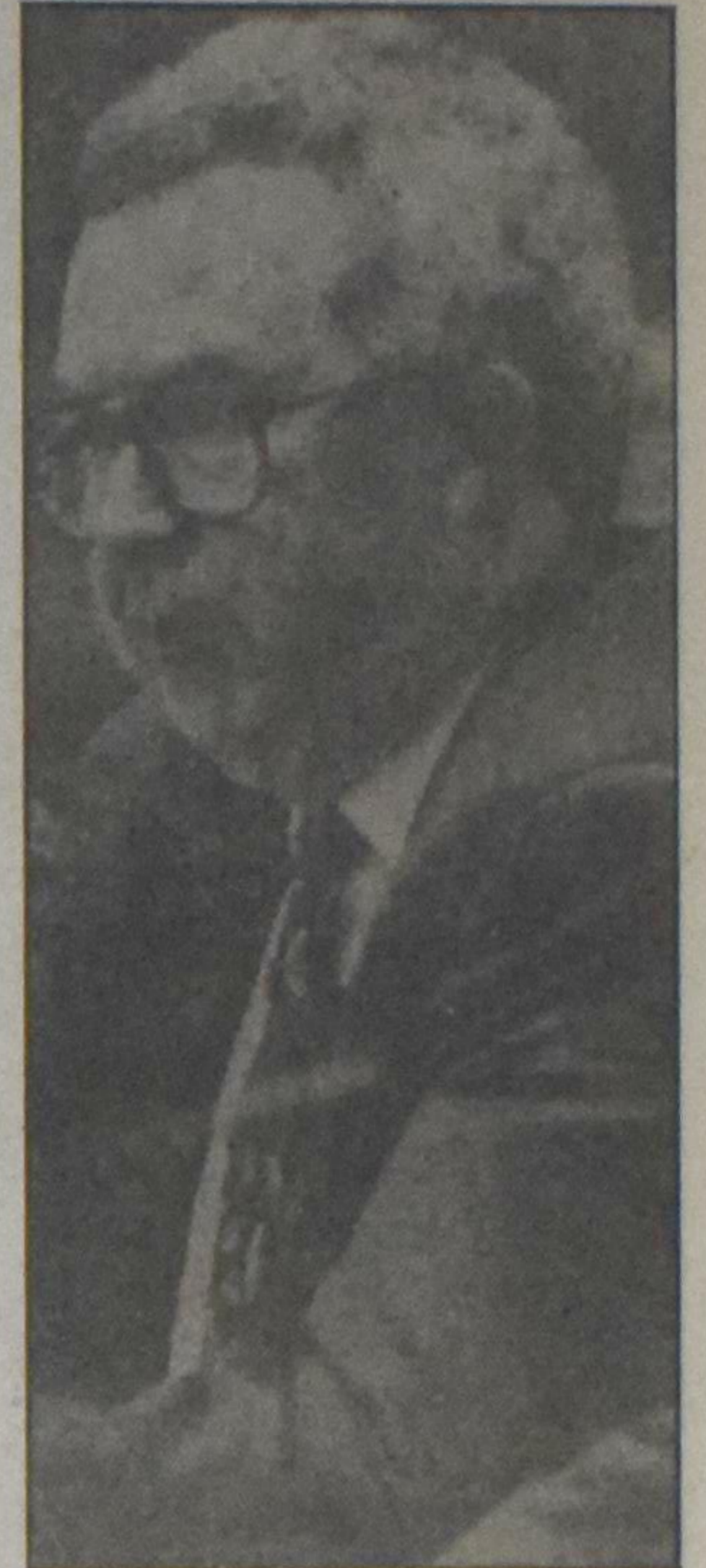
"Treat the country as a prize, not a prize-fight" — Jasper, Alta., April 3.

A stable society

"Our good fortune is due in part to the fact that we are part of a large, stable and respected country. That stability has brought the investment that let us grow. That size let us become a world leader in transportation, in telecommunication, in banking and in other fields. That respect gives us a voice far stronger than our numbers in world decisions about trade, the economy, the environment, security.

"We have established a social safety net that is the best in the world, and our federal system provides an insurance plan against economic slumps or shocks that has helped the whole country.

"The diversity of our society ... lets us move easily in that



Joe Clark: trustworthy.

global village, because our children grow up in communities of many cultures, because our federal institutions work and do their business in two international languages, because we are what the British thinker Barbara Ward has called 'the first international country'

Lack of self-awareness

"We are paying an immense cost today for our failure to have Canadians know our own country. We don't talk to one another enough. We don't travel enough in Canada. We don't teach our history or accomplishments. And, too often, what we think we know about one another is wrong....

"This year, Canada ranks first [in a United Nations study on the quality of life], ahead of Japan, ahead of the United States, ahead of Europe, ahead of everywhere else. No one but Canadians will be surprised by that ranking" — Calgary, April 28.

"Sometimes we might wish we were a simple country — one language, one culture, one clear identity. But that is not who we are, and has not been for centuries. We are a complex, accomplished society, whose success depends on our respect for ourselves and our respect for others" — Ottawa, June 3.

These brief quotes cannot adequately represent Clark's entire vision for Canada. But they do comfort and encourage some of us with the realization that someone at the top is plugging away at keeping Canada together. Joe Clark looks to be the most trustworthy politician in ministerial office today. I for one am proud that he's keeping Canada out of the microwave oven.

When Canadians work together we can take on the world and win.

To succeed in today's world, Canadians must be able to compete because our jobs directly depend on it. Preparing ourselves through training will help us to compete and secure the prosperity we want for ourselves and our children.

We have to invest in ourselves and be a country that says ... yes we can.



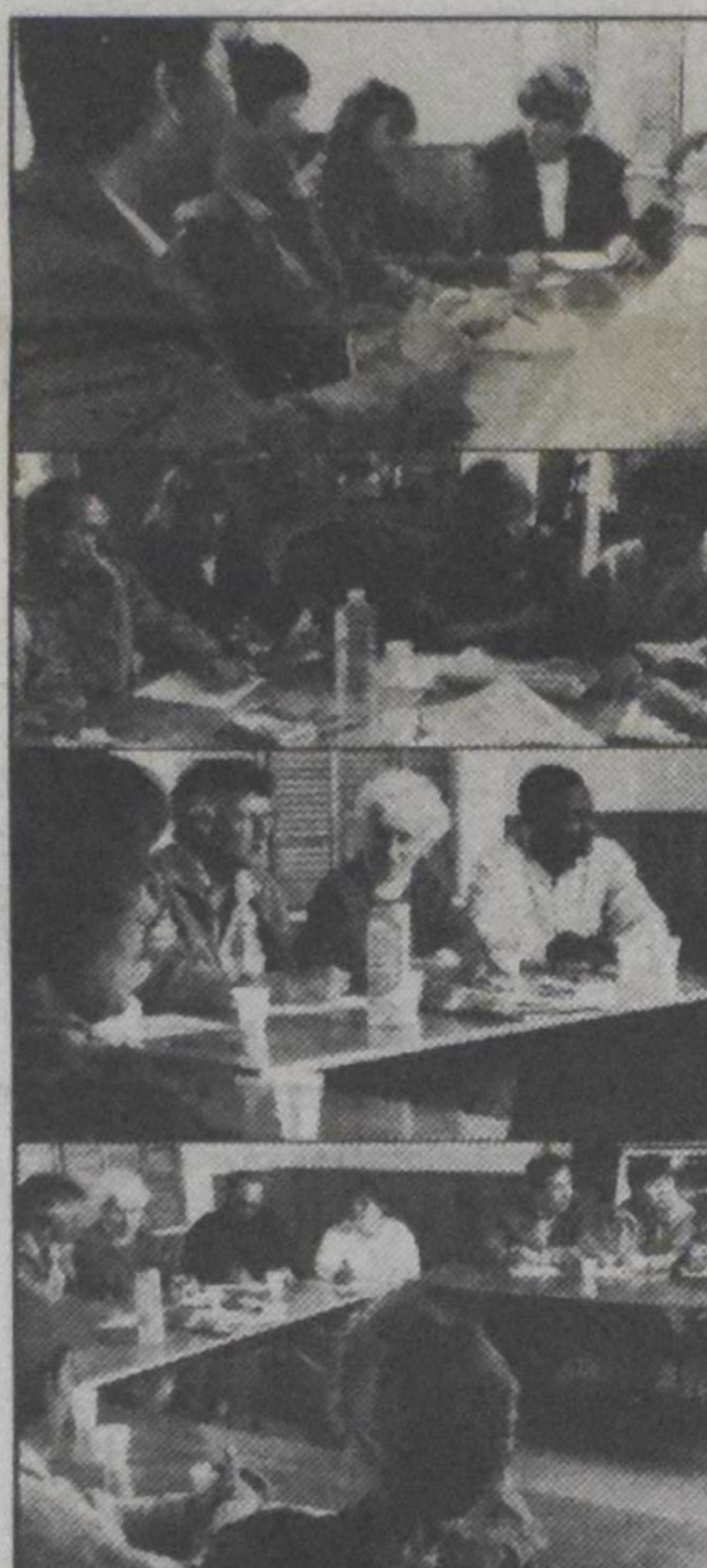
SWEEP RITE MANUFACTURING INC., REGINA

Everyone knows a small company from Regina can't compete in world markets. Everyone, that is, except Les Hulicsko, President of Sweep Rite Manufacturing Inc. His high technology, innovative, mechanical street sweepers are cleaning up around the world, with exports accounting for up to 75% of sales.

Yes we can. We've got the proof.

Canadians are succeeding every day. Many individual and business successes exist... with real benefits for individuals, the communities they live in and for Canadian industry.

Hundreds of Canadian companies are achieving remarkable international success. They're creating jobs, developing new skills and opportunities for thousands of Canadians and creating markets around the world for Canadian products.



COMMUNITY TALKS

The Prosperity Initiative's Steering Group is developing a consensus-based plan of action to be presented to Canadians in September. Canadians told us that they wanted to participate in developing this plan of action. We listened...

Through a series of "Community Talks", thousands of people in 186 communities across Canada have contributed their ideas. They talked about how to address the challenges and opportunities facing us all in the areas of competitiveness and learning. They talked about how to maintain our standard of living and secure our economic future. They concluded that all of us have to play a part... and the government is listening.

Yes we can. We've got the ability to build on our successes.

We have a history of working in co-operation with others for world-class achievements in peacekeeping, medicine and space exploration. Now, with business, labour, governments, academic and social groups working together, we can achieve prosperity through international competitiveness. But there is one more critical factor: Canada's ultimate potential depends on the commitment of individual Canadians to being the best.



ANITA LÉGER, QUEBEC

"I moved to Quebec with an Ontario teacher's certificate. For several years, I could only get work as a substitute. I knew it would be hard to get a full-time job if I didn't re-qualify, so I took my Quebec Certificate. I now teach full time, have a better salary and realize that if you want a better future, you have to be ready to retrain. It was worth it for me!"

Yes we can. We've got the people.

It's time to focus our energies on our most important economic challenge yet ... and prepare ourselves for a more prosperous future.

Yes, we can!

Canada



Canada



Largest number of Canadian immigrants are Asian

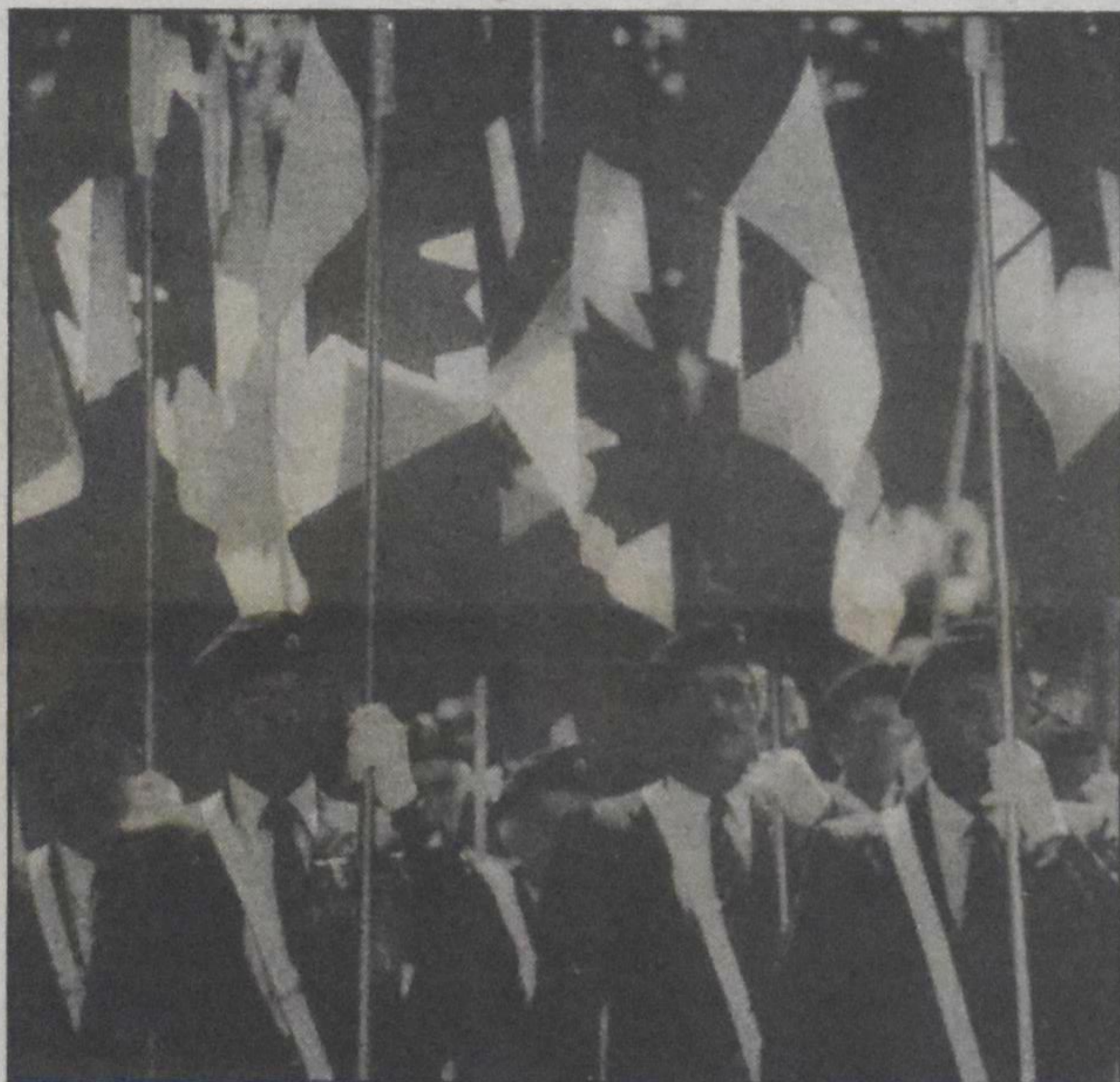
OTTAWA (Canadian Scene) — In 1991 Canada welcomed 226,596 new immigrants. More than half of them (117,457) settled in Ontario, while 49,533 went to Quebec, 31,541 to British Columbia and 16,884 to Alberta. By far the largest number (118,059) came from Asia, including 22,105 from Hong Kong, 13,466 from China and 12,006 from the Philippines. Another 47,140 immigrants came from Europe, with Poland being the

largest single source; at 15,144 it was the second only to Hong Kong as a source of immigrants last year.

Other major sources included India, Lebanon, Vietnam and Britain. At the other end of the scale Canada received one immigrant from each of Sao Tome e Principe, Greenland, Vanuatu, Liechtenstein and Monaco. Seventy-eight immigrants chose to settle in the Yukon and 124 in the Northwest Territories.



A long overdue memorial to Canadian soldiers



LONDON (Canadian Scene) — An imposing memorial will be raised in London, England, to pay tribute to the Canadian servicemen who fought in the two world wars. Many Canadians have been wondering why this has not been done before. More than one-and-a-half million Canadians took part in the First and Second World Wars, and more than 83,000 of them died on active service. However no official action was taken, and in 1988 the Canadian Memorial Foundation came into being to raise money from private donors.

A spokesperson for the group, Lee Maclaren, says that close to three million dollars has been raised in Britain and Canada, and a search is now on to find a Canadian sculptor to create the monument. It is planned to put the memorial in Green Park in central London, not far from Buckingham Palace. The Queen has given her permission for the project, and the British and Canadian governments have endorsed the plans.

It is planned to have a large monument, but not on the massive scale of the Vimy memorial which commemorates the capture of Vimy Ridge by the Canadian Corps in 1917. This was one of the fiercest battles of the First World War and the most spectacular victory won by the Allied armies in France.

The Canadian High Commissioner in London, Fredrik Eaton, says the younger generation is deplorably ignorant about the two world wars which preserved their freedom. "Something permanent is needed," he says, "as a reminder of the toil, tears and sweat which went into the effort to preserve our freedoms, and Canadians were in the forefront alongside Britain in all this effort."



small
talk

Alice Los

Oh, Canada!

Soon it will be Canada Day but I'm not in the mood to celebrate. This country doesn't seem to be its usual self anymore. An air of gloom and discontent lies like a thick blanket from the Pacific to the Atlantic and nobody appears able to throw it off.

Where did it come from? It's everywhere. It covers the political arena where the battle for national unity rages. It keeps the economy gasping for air. It bulges over pockets of racial tension. The unemployed, the homeless, the sexually abused restlessly toss and turn under its oppressive weight while crime and violence stalk the streets.

What happened? Far be it from me to be frivolous and analyze this enormous malaise in a sentence or two (provided I were even qualified to do so). But one thing definitely comes to mind.

This country has for some time disregarded its Christian heritage. Not surprisingly, it's beginning to show. What else could we expect? It's an old, tragic story, repeated many times. It's a story the Israelites of the Old Testament knew all too well. They heard Moses say, "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse — the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known" (Deut. 11:26-28). This message is still valid for today, and those who know it are duty-bound to reveal it. There is a choice and there is hope!



Therefore, I may throw my hat into the air on July 1 after all! I will pray for this magnificent land, and I trust other Christians to do the same. I will think about and be grateful for all the wonderful things Canada still stands for, profound and mundane alike, such as freedom of thought and speech and movement, democracy, enough prosperity to go around, kindness and hospitality. And I will revel in fallow fields and woody acres which speak of room to spare, a snowstorm in April and Canada geese. And there's the Sears catalogue, coffee at Tim Horton's; a piano and someone who knows how to play it in every farmhouse; silos catching the last rays of the sun on their roofs; the prairies; the RCMP; Parliament Hill; the Toronto skyline; and Vancouver's Stanley Park.

Canada! I still experience it as a gift from God who nudged my way across its borders long ago and allows me to call it home this side of heaven. I pray that millions more, native-born and initial strangers alike, may joyfully affirm this sentiment. *God keep our land glorious and free!*

Alice Los lives in Inkerman, Ont. From her home she watches the sun rise and set over fields and a winding road with a skyline of trees and silos.

Feature

The right leader for the right time: How Jun Vencer was led to the World Evangelical Fellowship

What life experiences prepare an individual to lead an international fellowship that represents 500,000 churches and has 100 million members?

When Jun Vencer, attorney and ordained minister, is installed as World Evangelical Fellowship's (WEF) first Two-Thirds World international director this summer in the Philippines, he will draw upon all of these experiences as he provides leadership to a massive movement dedicated to helping the church in global evangelization.

It is a task for which God has uniquely prepared Vencer, although his early days gave little indication of what was in store for him as an adult.

Agustin B. "Jun" (for Junior) Vencer was born in 1946 in a small Filipino settlement called Nueva Sevilla and raised in the Roman Catholic faith. Jun's parents divorced when he was young, causing him to question God's love and justice. After running away from home at 12, he experienced first-hand the pain and loneliness of life on the streets. When he returned to his mother's home, where he lived before running away, Jun's parents decided to have him stay with his father who was a surgeon.

Dr. Vencer was also involved in politics and had opened a print shop. Jun eagerly began handling many of the day-to-day duties of publishing and, in the process, greatly improved his reading skills.

The younger Vencer also assisted his father in his medical practice and, while in his mid-teens, decided to take care of patients himself one week when his father was away. Jun quickly abandoned his amateur practice but maintained his interest in medicine.

After graduating from school, Jun enrolled in Central Philippine University intending to follow in his father's footsteps by becoming a medical doctor.

By his own account, he started reading the wrong books and keeping the wrong company, which led to his agnosticism. He often debated with Catholic priests but was dissatisfied with their explanations for the world's suffering and injustices.

During his senior year, Jun became seriously ill and began to read the Bible. Influenced by believers he met and a belief that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead, he committed his life to Christ.

Need for a caring community

His studies were abruptly interrupted when his father became ill and needed a costly operation. The only money Jun had available was his university fees, so he turned to police work as a homicide investigator

to help pay the bills.

It was through this experience that Jun learned about the harshness of big city life and the grave injustices that are hidden from most people. It also sparked a keen awareness of the need for justice and a caring evangelical community in the Filipino society, a spark which continues to burn in him to this day.

Jun eventually graduated with a bachelor of science degree in preparatory medicine, but by now he was more interested in becoming an attorney than in being a doctor. He earned a second degree in law at the University of the East and passed the Philippine bar exam in 1973.

In the process, he met and married his wife, Ann. Today the Vencers have three sons and a daughter.

After graduation, Jun became the business-legal officer for the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines and served as administrator of the 1977 Metro Manila Billy Graham Crusade. At the conclusion of the Graham crusade, Vencer

resolved to enter a corporate law practice, but the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches' board of directors invited him to become the council's general secretary. He felt led to accept and soon became impressed with the need for finding ways for Filipino churches to work together.

It was during this process that Jun grew to more fully appreciate the work of World Evangelical Fellowship, the international linking body for national evangelical fellowships similar to PCEC. Jun was attracted by the strategic value of the fellowship, and in 1972 he became a member of WEF's Executive Council.

Meeting physical and spiritual needs

Vencer's vivid memories of the spiritual deficiencies and intolerable suffering of Manila's poor caused him to concentrate on what evangelicals could do for the good of society. He set out to influence Christian leaders to focus on caring for the total human being and initiated programs and strategies designed to carry out those efforts.

PHILRADS, a relief and development ministry conducted in partnership with World Relief, was born out of Jun's concern for ministering to physical as well as spiritual needs. Since its inception in the late 1970's, PHILRADS has assisted nearly two million people.

Because of its close links to local churches, PHILRADS is



Photo: courtesy WEF

Jun Vencer, international director of the World Evangelical Fellowship.

often able to deliver aid after a natural disaster more rapidly than the government.

When Mt. Pinatubo erupted last summer killing thousands of Filipinos and totally or partially destroying tens of thousands of homes, PHILRADS moved into action. The relief operation was conducted in five phases, beginning in late April when the volcano began exhibiting signs of restiveness. Working through 20 local evangelical churches, PHILRADS provided food, medicine, blankets and other assistance to more than 8,000 families.

Jun's concern for evangelism resulted in him chairing the Discipling a Whole Nation (DAWN) movement in the Philippines, which calls for planting an evangelical church in every barrio by the year 2000. He was also the founding chairperson of the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia.

A church-and-state response

Vencer has always believed that the church should be involved in national political issues. When Benigno Aquino was assassinated in 1983, Jun, working closely with the PCEC board of directors, wrote a set of biblical guidelines for the PCEC constituency designed to be used as an evangelical response to the situation.

During the national election between President Ferdinand Marcos and Cory Aquino, Jun and the PCEC leadership mobilized evangelicals to pray together against bloodshed. When PCEC invited the new president Cory Aquino, to a prayer breakfast, she accepted.

The gathering was the start

of a growing relationship between the president and Filipino evangelicals.

Vencer's grasp of key missions issues, strategic thinking and wealth of personal experiences exemplify the types of significant contributions that Two-Thirds World Christian leaders are making throughout the globe for the cause of Jesus Christ.

When he becomes WEF's international director on July 1, it will be the first time in its 146-year history that WEF will be led by a non-Westerner. It is a move very much in keeping with WEF's philosophy of expressing in practical ways the fellowship's unity and the equality of all its members.

The decade of the '90s should be an exciting time for World Evangelical Fellowship, for it will be led by a man of God who knows how to transform words into deeds. A man whose vision to affirm the wholeness of God's plan will undoubtedly make a powerful impact for the cause of Christ throughout the world in the years ahead. A man who did not let being raised poor become an excuse for failure, but rather allowed God to use it as an opportunity to display his strength in ministering to a lost and needy world.

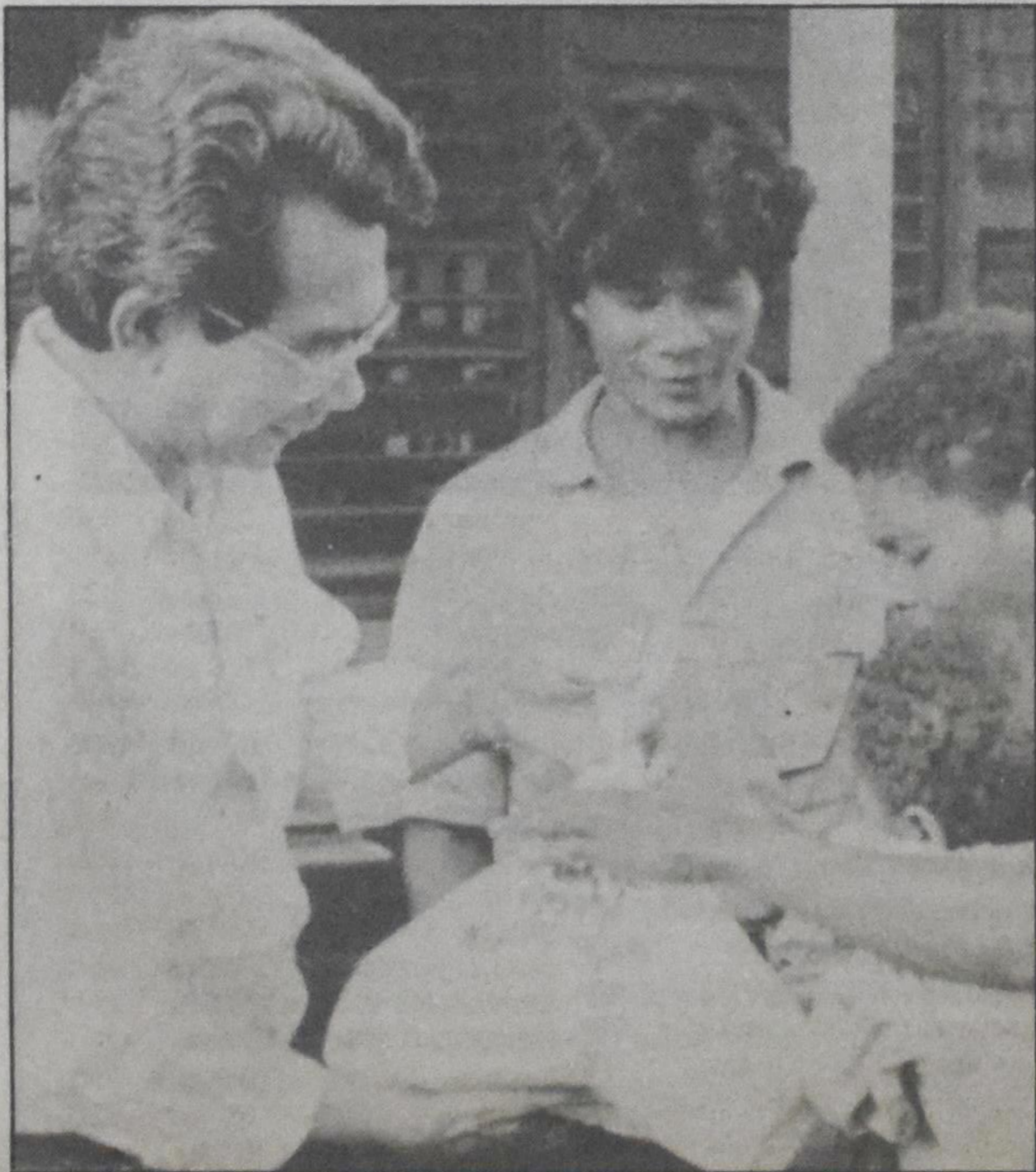


Photo: courtesy WEF

Jun Vencer, new head of the World Evangelical Fellowship, was instrumental in starting PHILRADS, a relief agency which helps people like those pictured with Vencer.



Books

Robert VanderVennen, page editor



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Laughter

“Our mouths were filled with laughter...” (Ps. 126: 2).

Once, when a French diplomat had been appointed as ambassador to a distant nation, he asked for a last audience with then French President Charles deGaulle. “Monsieur le President,” he exclaimed passionately, “I am filled with joy at my appointment!”

Mr. deGaulle’s response was as decisive as a rapier thrust: “Sir! You are a career diplomat! Joy is an inappropriate emotion in your profession!”

Inappropriate?

There have been times in religious history when a remark like that set the tone for the church as well. Ellen Glasgow, in her autobiography, writes about her father, a lifetime elder in the Presbyterian church. She describes him as “full of rectitude,” and “rigid with duty.” From her vantage point as a young girl, “in his long life he never committed a pleasure!” Can you picture him?

Someone once defined a certain branch of Christianity as alive with “the haunting fear that someone, somewhere may be happy.” And Alexander Cruden, famed Bible scholar of the 18th century, put on his best “Sunday face” when he declared that “to laugh is to be merry in a sinful manner.”

Surprise!

No one planned to laugh in the community where the psalmist of Psalm 126 lived. The scene could be that after a battle, as a few destitute people tried to carry on. The men had been led away as slaves, the houses are ruins, the animals lie slaughtered across the fields and the crops are wasting in decay. No one feels good. The children might sing “Happy Birthday,” but there’s no twinkle in any eye. Those left behind struggle on, but their energy is gone.

But then one day, as the children drag a stick along a dusty road, as the elderly sit in front of broken down houses, strangers appear on the horizon. All the villagers freeze in their tracks. It’s like somebody hit the pause button on the VCR. Have the enemy armies returned to strike again?

It’s the youngest child who moves first. “Abba! Abba!” she cries. “Daddy! Daddy!”

And then the whole community is on the move. Cousins see faces they thought they’d forgotten. Wives are shuddering with overwhelming joy as they tuck unruly strands of hair into place and smooth worn and dirty dresses. A man too old to walk makes new creases on his face when he laughs a toothless grin. The exiles have returned!

Play it again, God!

Once you’ve learned to laugh, you can’t give it up. Eugene O’Neill, in his delightful play “Lazarus Laughed,” imagined what it must have been like for Lazarus of Bethany after Jesus called him from the tomb that day described in John’s Gospel, chapter 11. He pictured a man whose skin never fully recovered from the decay of death, who walked around white and scaly, and who had to stay out of the hot sun. But he also portrayed a man who had this incredible tendency to giggle as he strolled along, to burst out with laughter in the most embarrassing situations, to start a community joke that was as contagious as the plague.

How could someone who had been “surprised by joy,” as Wordsworth named it and C.S. Lewis claimed it, ever think that life or religion was meant to be dull? Those who had once been touched by the resurrecting powers of God could never live a sour-puss faith again.

That’s why Psalm 126 ends with a prayer. “You made us laugh once, God! Do it again!” Do it in the parched places of our lives. Do it through the tears of pain. Do it over the cries of death.

Those who think frowns are the mask of holiness will never understand, of course. But someday soon God will tickle them!

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.

Egyptian Coptic Christianity

The Coptic Encyclopedia, editor-in-chief Aziz S. Atiya. Hard cover, 8 volumes, 2,500 articles. New York: Macmillan (distributed in Canada by Maxwell Macmillan, Cambridge, Ont.), 1991, \$1,260. Reviewed by Mr. C. Hulsman, Leiden, the Netherlands.

Macmillan, publisher of several encyclopedic works, is to be congratulated on the publication of the *Coptic Encyclopedia*, the first encyclopedia to focus on the largest and most dynamic church in the Middle East.

The Coptic Orthodox Church, the largest national church in the Islamic world, retains the spirit of the early Christian church whose traditions it guards while maintaining a blossoming spiritual life. The church witnessed a renaissance in recent decades, its fruits being Sunday school, student movements and flourishing churches and monasteries.

Christian monasticism originated in Egypt and played an important role in the evangelization and civilization of the West. Today it plays a role in evangelizing the Christian community in Egypt. We often read of attacks by Muslim fundamentalists on Christian communities in Egypt. Christians are under constant pressure to convert to Islam; consequently, evangelism and strengthening their Christian faith is of great importance.

Dr. Atiya (1898-1988),

general editor of the encyclopedia, immigrated to the U.S. where he founded the Institute of Coptic Studies and the Middle East Centre of the University of Utah.

Many contributors

The encyclopedia has a large number of high quality contributions on many aspects of Coptic history. It covers the period of the church fathers, Christian Egypt until the Arab conquest of Egypt in 642, and the church in the Islamic period. Muslim-Christian relations are covered up to the Second World War. Other articles can be found in the fields of theology, liturgy, archeology, art, literature and hagiography. The encyclopedia also gives entries on geographical areas outside Egypt, particularly northern Sudan and Ethiopia.

Contributions to the encyclopedia come from Egyptian Christians and Western scholars including a number of Roman Catholic priests. The Roman Catholic Church shows a strong interest

in Egyptian Christianity.

The encyclopedia gives a good picture of the state of research in the several fields of Coptic studies. Articles are well-written and often well-documented. The encyclopedia will be a tremendous help for many years to come for those who are involved in Coptic studies. It is a must for church historians, theologians, Coptologists, students in the fields of Middle Eastern history, Egyptian archeology, art history and Islamologists.

Unfortunately, students of the history of the Middle East have generally not paid much attention to the Christian minority in Islamic Egypt. It is to be hoped that this encyclopedia will stimulate their interest in the history of the Copts in Egypt.

The encyclopedia is of interest for Western Christians because it is good to see how God has guided and protected this church of ancient martyrs which has been living under Islamic domination since the year 642.

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THE BACK TO GOD HOUR



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Synod 1992

Waiting for the day

Marian Van Til

I realize that not all Christian Reformed women believe that it would be right for them or their "sisters" — that's delegate language, except of course they say "brothers" — to be ordained. I admit I have a hard time understanding that.

Some women don't feel the need to be ordained. Nor do I — at least not as a minister; my calling is in a different area.

Some say they can use their gifts perfectly well without being ordained. Perhaps they can. But if that's so — and synod's "compromise" implies that it is — then one

can't help but ask the question: exactly what good is ordination? If women can perfectly well use their God-given gifts without it, why can't men? (Is it some peculiar male handicap to need to be ordained in order to live out their "call"?)

At the heart of the heat behind ordaining women is something I've heard mentioned for the first time only this year by a couple of delegates; when all has been said theologically, when all has been read and said biblically, and we're still not agreeing and still fearful of one another,

and still threatening to leave each other, there's another crucial factor involved: the nature of the way we relate to each other in *any* area of life as males and females.

Patriarchy. That's a scary word to a lot of people because it sounds "feminist." That doesn't mean our society — and our church — aren't patriarchal, however. Rev. Peter Nicolai was right when he said that, historically, society and the church have reduced authority to *power*. It's also typically true that those who hold power don't realize how

much power they have over those unempowered. I submit that's very true regarding male power over women, also in the church. For that reason I'm glad that Rev. Jack Vos got synod to agree that the men in the church need to learn and understand just how women experience the structures of the church.

The most encouraging and enjoyable thing to me about the week at a synod like this contains an element of irony: I made a small handful of new friends at this synod. They're people wonderfully full of fun

and humour; they're sensitive; I saw them cry and be vulnerable; they're people who share themselves with you — and all of them are men, and all of them are ordained.

My new pastor and elder friends have obvious pastoral gifts. I have female friends with those same gifts; they may use them, but not in the empowering way that ordination bestows. My friends, male and female, and I are awaiting the day when our church will view us the way we believe God does.

Synod digest All articles by Marian Van Til

What the decision allows

Though synod refused to allow women to be ordained it says it wants to "encourage the churches to use the gifts of women members to the fullest possible extent in their local churches, including allowing women to teach, expound the Word of God and provide pastoral care, under the supervision of the elders."

Synod did not spell out how such things may or may not be done by women and is for now leaving that up to individual congregations. It was suggested that in the future, some sort of "certification" to "expound" (preach) after assuring a women woman is qualified to do so, would be put in place.

But for now, if a local church has a woman or women who are capable of preaching and wish to do so, and their church council allows them to, they may. Or if a female seminarian, for example, were available to lead a service and the council invited her to, she could legitimately do so.

No mention was made whether female ministers from churches with whom we are in ecclesiastical fellowship — the Reformed Church in America, for instance — may "expound" in CRC churches, though they are ordained, of course. Nor was administering the sacraments — or not — included in synod's statement; though a few delegates raised the question, synod didn't officially mention it and seemed to preserve that for ordained men.

Women may now also do the kind of pastoral work that elders and ministers do. They could, for example, be called "adjunct elders" and be commissioned but not ordained. As of now, each local church may permit gifted women to carry on virtually any ministry the church has provided she isn't given official ordination authority to do so.

Try to understand

With files by Bonny Mulder Wynia

On Synod's last day, in the wake of the candlelight vigil and the flood of protest to delegates — especially those delegates who favour women's ordination but voted against it — from so many women, Rev. Jack Vos (Classis Niagara and synod vice president) suggested a resolution which synod could hardly reject.

Synod 1992 at the last minute went on record to "urge each council to make every effort to understand how the congregation's female members experience the church in its official functioning."

Synod adopted the motion because "many women experience exclusion from ordination as inequality in Christ and their giftedness as being less important than the giftedness of male members." Synod concluded that "pastoral listening and understanding will help prevent, alleviate or remove pain and alienation."

Members counted now, not 'families'

Synod 1992 adopted a proposal that has been cropping up frequently in the last years: church membership will no longer be counted by families but by individual members.

Tied to that, the "per family quota" — suggested financial contributions based on the number of "families" per congregation — will from now on be called the "denominational ministry share" (DMS) and will be based on the number of confessing members per church. The change was made because there are increasing numbers of single adults in the church who are not part of family units and who did not count, numerically speaking.



Peter and Marja are



Dear Readers:

With the publishing of this column, our file has run dry. Here are the last letters we have. All of them respond in some fashion to previous columns. After today we will be on an enforced sabbatical until your questions and opinions move us back to the computer.

Dear P&M:

This letter does not contain any questions. It is only intended to thank you for the way you answered me (April 17, 1992). The way you translated my Dutch letter into English was fantastic.

As you recall, I had a sleepless night wondering if God knew everything in advance when he created the world. I do agree with you that he did but that thought still gives me some difficulty. There's only one thing I can do: let it rest and give it over into his hands. Maybe I will understand it all one day.

In a second question I expressed some concern about the casual way young people dress for church these days (April 24, 1992). You advised me to concentrate on their happy faces and not the way they dressed. I'll give it a try. But I'm still sure that they would not put on jeans or slacks if they had an audience with the Mulroneys or the Queen.

Just one more comment about your column concerning nudism (May 8, 1992). Since God himself clothed us we may not go around in the nude, especially not with pleasure! The couple who did this need to ask forgiveness for this. On the other hand I did find that your answer seemed best for someone who is really attracted to this lifestyle.

I'd better stop. Fortunately I don't have to answer all those questions. I hope and pray that God will bless you and the advisory panel and give you wisdom for all these difficult questions. This letter does not require an answer. It is simply intended as a hearty "Thank You" for what you did for me.

God's blessing to you and my heartfelt greetings.

Dear Heartfelt Thanks:

The challenge of translating from Dutch to English is certainly interesting. We find it especially exciting to hear from the seniors in our community. We hope your example will encourage others to write us, too. So our heartfelt thanks go out to you as well.

Dear P&M:

Thanks for your information about the infertility support ministry (March 27 and May 1, 1992). We used to attend such a group but it eventually petered out because some of the couples suddenly were "with child" while others were busy elsewhere. Some, like us, had to accept their childlessness, which was not easy. But then nothing has come easily for me, be it finding the right marriage partner, getting a job I like, or having children. Well, I got the first, so I suppose one out of three isn't too bad!

Today our "parenting" is limited to our nephews and nieces and our friend's children. My wife loves checking out all the new babies!

Dear Favourite Uncle:

Your letter underscores the importance of evaluating our lives in terms of what we have, not what we don't have. It seems to us that you have found a way to sincerely sing that old song, "Count your blessings, name them one by one."

Don't be surprised to find yourself playing a special helping role in the lives of these children sometime in the future. We know of several situations where a young person needed to stay somewhere else for awhile because of illness or conflict in the family, or even because the parents were transferred to another city and a teenager insisted on finishing high school with his friends. In such instances a favourite uncle or aunt is a real Godsend.

One question: Have you looked into foster parenting for Family and Children's Services? There is a constant need for good homes willing to take in babies on a short-term basis or teens on a long-term basis. This may be a way to express your parental desires while meeting some very pressing needs among society's children. Give it some prayerful consideration.

Dear Readers:

Please write soon!

Write to: P&M

c/o Calvinist Contact

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Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Calvinist Contact</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to six column inches. <i>Calvinist Contact</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$13.50 per column inch (GST inclusive).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS</p> <p>Non-subscribing newlyweds whose wedding announcement with their future address appears in <i>Calvinist Contact</i> will receive a letter offering a first-year subscription for only \$20.00 (GST inclusive)! To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request and pay for the wedding announcement to enclose \$20.00 and the couple's future address.</p> <p>Calvinist Contact Publishing Ltd. 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (416) 682-8311 Fax: (416) 682-8313</p>	<p>HAANSTRA: We would like to thank our children and grandchildren for the enjoyable evening they gave to us for our 45th wedding anniversary. We want to thank all who came out to the open house reception, for flowers, presents and good wishes and for the many cards we received. But above all we praise the Lord for all his goodness to us. Harvey and Joyce. R.R. #9, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W8</p> <p>KUIPERS: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!" We wish to thank our children, relatives and friends, for the gifts, cards, flowers, and best wishes we received on the occasion of our 50th wedding anniversary. Our heartfelt thanks to those who travelled from afar, and all the beautiful letters we received as well. And above all we thank the Lord, for all the many blessings we have received in 50 years of marriage. Cornelis and Dieuwke Kuipers R.R. #2, Lyndhurst, ON K0E 1N0</p>	 <p><i>Congratulations to Ralph and Cora Fledderus (nee Nieboer) on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary!</i></p> <p>1967 July 1 1992 Together with our children, we thank God for 25 years of his love and faithfulness to us and 25 years of our love for each other:</p> <p>RALPH and CORA FLEDDERUS (nee Nieboer)</p> <p>Bill & Susan (fiancee) Francine Kevin Open house will be held on July 4, 1992, from 1-3 p.m. at our home: 1847 Royal Crescent, London, ON N5W 2A9 "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways" (Ps. 128).</p> <p>1967 June 30 1992 "Great is thy faithfulness!" With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord we celebrate the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents and (very recently!) grandparents,</p> <p>PETER and LENA KIERS (nee Vreugdenhil)</p> <p>We pray that the Lord will continue to keep you in his care and that you may have many more happy years together. You've been such a blessing to us. With love: Ken & Greta Kiers Jeff Kiers & Karen VanderWal Pam & James Heida Leanna Angela Kiers Home address: 1587 Second Ave., St. Catharines, ON L2R 6P9</p> <p>1952 July 9 1992 With thankfulness to God, we are happy to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,</p> <p>LAMMERT and DENISE SLOFSTRA (nee Lollinga)</p> <p>May God continue to bless and guide you for many more years. Congratulations Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma! Henry & Nancy Slofstra — Linwood, Ont. William, Anna, Emily Peter & Gayle Slofstra — Orangeville, Ont. Martin Slofstra — Brampton, Ont. Samantha, Michael William & Jennifer Slofstra — Georgetown, Ont. Kathleen Relatives and friends are invited to an open house which will be held on Saturday, July 11, 1992, at the Immanuel Chr. Ref. Church (Parish Hall) from 3-5 p.m. Home address: 64 Woodward Ave., Brampton, ON L6V 1K6</p>	<p>Aalten Bloomfield 1952 July 10 1992 "But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you" (Ps. 39: 7). With praise and thanksgiving to God, we are happy to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,</p> <p>W. BERNARD and GRADA GROOT NIBBELINK (nee Heideman)</p> <p>Thank you Mom and Dad for leading us in the ways of faith and helping us to see that our hope is also in the Lord. May he continue to bless and keep you. With love, Bill & Tena Groot Nibbelink — Komoka, Ont. Sarah, Nathan Eric & Carolyn Groot Nibbelink — St. Catharines, Ont. Jenica, Michelle Elna Groot Nibbelink — Bloomfield, Ont. An open house will be held at our parents' home on Saturday, July 11, 1992, from 2-5 p.m. Home address: R.R. #2, Bloomfield, ON K0K 1G0 Telephone: (613) 393-5350.</p> <p>1952 July 9 1992 With thanksgiving and joy to our Lord we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,</p> <p>ABRAHAM and AGGIE SMIT (nee Timmermans)</p> <p>We pray for God's blessing and care upon you. Love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren, John & Donna Smit — Hagersville Matthew, Mandy, Melanie, Larissa Walter & Lorraine Smit — Jarvis Jonathan, Elisabeth Jane (deceased) & Dan Eriksen — Harcourt Joni, Jill Aggie & Ron Marr — Jarvis Willie, Eric Margaret & Ajay Shakyaver — Ajax Diane & Scott Phillips — Hagersville Brian, Meghan, Kayla, Ethan Abe Smit — Jarvis Joanne Smit — Jarvis Julie & Chuck Veldhuis — Fenwick Home address: R.R. #1, Jarvis, ON N0A 1H0</p>	<p>Franeker, Woodstock, the Neth. Ont. 1947 1992 On July 9, 1992, our parents,</p> <p>FOPPE and JET DE JONG</p> <p>will, the Lord willing, celebrate their 45th anniversary. The years of their marriage have been blessed ones, and they, in turn, have been a blessing to many others whom their lives have touched. We thank God for their life together, and pray for many more years. With love from: Al & Jessie Schut — Edmonton, Alta. Kevin, Steven, Jonathan, Danielle Bob & Sue Pallister — Bothwell, Ont. Gini, Greg, Jamie Fran & Don Ross — Edmonton, Alta. Although there will be no formal celebration of this event, we invite friends and family to extend their best wishes to them at 268 Russell St., Woodstock, ON N4S 2Z4 (519-537-7778).</p> <p>Sarnia, Ont. Woodstock, Ont. 1962 June 30 1992 With thankfulness to God for his love and faithfulness, we celebrate the 30th wedding anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents,</p> <p>PETER and ALY WIERENGA (nee De Jong)</p> <p>We thank the Lord for them and pray that God will continue to bless them and keep them in his care. Congratulations Mom and Dad. Love from your children and grandchildren: Harold & Carolyn Wierenga — Woodstock Erica, Lindsay Yvonne & Rob Hoiting — Woodstock Shawn, Mark, Darren Melinda & Bob Stacey — Woodstock Alicia, Jordon, Stephen, Jodi Peter & Tami Wierenga — Woodstock Ingrid & Mike Dortono — St. Catharines An open house will be held at Peter and Aly Wierenga's home in Woodstock, Ont., on Saturday, July 11, 1992, from 1-4 p.m. Best wishes only, please. Home address: R.R. # 5, Woodstock, ON N4S 7V9 Tel. (519) 467-5352.</p>
<p>Birth</p> <p>DRENTH (NEE GRIFFOEN): "The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made" (Ps. 145: 13b). We, Marty and Margaret, give praise to the Lord for entrusting to our care a son,</p> <p>DEREK JOHN</p> <p>on May 28, 1992. Derek is loved and welcomed by grandparents John and Pauline Drenth of St. Catharines, Ont., Jake and Audrey Griffioen of Cannington, Ont., great-grandparents Mrs. Evelyn Drenth of Grimsby, Ont., Mr. and Mrs. Henry and Corrie Diemer of St. Catharines, Ont., and Mrs. A. Griffioen of Hilversum, the Neth.</p>	<p>VANDERLAAN-DYKSTRA: With joy and thanksgiving to God Co and Alice Vanderlaan announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter</p> <p>DENISE SUZANNE to RAYMOND SYDNEY</p> <p>son of Gerry and Lainie Dykstra of Richmond, B.C. The ceremony will take place on Saturday, June 27, 1992, at the West End Chr. Ref. Church, Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>WIERSMA-VISSCHER: With thanks to God for bringing them together, we are happy to announce the marriage of our parents,</p> <p>LUCY WIERSMA and JAN VISSCHER</p> <p>The ceremony will take place on June 27, 1992, D.V., at 11:30 a.m. at Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont. As children we wish you the Lord's blessings on your wedding day and may he guide you throughout your marriage. Love from your children: Laura & Jim Huurman — St. Catharines Ryan, Marisa Michael Wiersma & Sandra (fiancee) — St. Catharines Cheryl & Albert Wimers — Welland Paula Wiersma — St. Catharines Elaine & Rob Roorda — Brampton Caroline & Ron Brouwer — Cambridge Carol-Lee, Amy, Kimberly Michael Visscher & Candace — Kitchener Ian Visscher — Kitchener Future mailing address: 65 Colebrook Crt., Kitchener, ON N2E 1Y8</p>			<p>For Rent</p> <p>Apartment for rent in downtown Dunnville area. Two-bedroom, upper apartment. Newly decorated. Fridge and stove included. Asking \$550.00 plus utilities, available August 1, 1992. Call Scott Visser at (416) 774-1332, after 5:30.</p>
<p>Birthday</p> <p>DROST: With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, we announce the 80th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother,</p> <p>JANTINA DROST (nee DeWeerd)</p> <p>on June 30, 1992. An open house will be held at Conostoga Crest, Drayton, Ont., on June 30, 1992, from 2-4 p.m. Congratulations Mom and may the Lord continue to grant you health and happiness. Love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Home address: Conostoga Crest, 15-81 Wood St., Drayton, ON N0G 1P0</p>				<p>Accommodations</p> <p>Accommodation needed in Terrace, B.C., beginning in early August. Room and board, independent apartment or shared accommodation. Please call Diane at (519) 524-6416 (home) (616) 957-7061 (June 22-July 15) Home address: Diane Nyman, R.R. #2, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0</p> <p>Living accommodations available in Brampton, Ont. Close to Christian elementary school, church and community college. Available by August 15. If interested please call (519) 587-2370 after 6 p.m. (females only please).</p>
				<p>Employment wanted</p> <p>Young Christian man is looking for employment on a dairy farm, or any kind of work. Please call: (416) 899-1608, after 7 p.m.</p> <p>Obituaries begin on next page.</p>

Classifieds

Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Teachers	Personal
		<p>1907 1992</p> <p>The Lord called home suddenly, so close to our 60th wedding anniversary, my dearly beloved husband, loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather,</p> <p>HARM (HARRY) PYPER</p> <p>in his 85th year.</p> <p>Husband of Henderika Pyper (nee Brondsema).</p> <p>Dear father of:</p> <p>Helena & Henk Oosterveld</p> <p>Johanna & Jake Klimstra</p> <p>Albert & Lynda Pyper</p> <p>Jean & Gerry Van Holst</p> <p>Ed & Jane Pyper</p> <p>Loving Opa of 18 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.</p> <p>"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. I desire to depart and be with Christ which is better by far" (Phil. 1: 21 and 23).</p> <p>Guelph, June 15, 1992:</p> <p>Hij is nu daar, waar geen zorgen meer zijn;</p> <p>hij is nu daar waar geen angst is en pijn.</p> <p>Hij is nu daar, 't is voor ons een gemis,</p> <p>hij is nu daar waar vreugde slechts is.</p> <p>Funeral service took place on Thursday, June 18, 1992, at 2 o'clock from the First Chr. Ref. Church in Guelph. Rev. Jerry Hoytema officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence address:</p> <p>257 Water St., Guelph, ON N1G 1B6</p> <p>An advertisement and picture, announcing the 60th wedding anniversary of Harry & Henderika Pyper, appeared in the June 19, 1992 issue of <i>Calvinist Contact</i>. This issue had gone to press before the ad could be recalled.</p> <p>(C.C. Staff)</p>	<p>BURNABY, B.C.: John Knox Christian School needs a Grade 5 teacher (80% position) with a strong background in music. Candidate must be certified by the B.C. Ministry and able to teach all subject matter from a Christian perspective.</p> <p>Contact Peter Valkenier, Principal 8260-13th Ave. Burnaby, BC V3N 2G5 (604) 522-1410</p> <p>MAPLE RIDGE, B.C.: Haney - Pitt Meadows Chr. School is now accepting applications for primary and intermediate teaching positions. A background in music is desirable as well as computer literacy. Please send resumes to:</p> <p>T. Vroon, Principal Haney - Pitt Meadows Chr. School 121240-203rd. St., Maple Ridge, BC V2X 4V5 Canada Tel.: (604) 465-4442</p> <p>REXDALE, Ont.: Timothy Chr. School is accepting applications for a teaching principal. Ability to give musical instruction (choral/ band) and/or a working knowledge of computers would be assets. Interested applicants should send their resumes to:</p> <p>William Groot 34 Fallowfield Rd. Rexdale, ON M9W 2W2 Phone: (416) 743-2554 (evenings)</p> <p>Terrace, B.C.: Centennial Chr. School invites applications from secondary school teachers for a position to teach music/band. Please direct inquiries to:</p> <p>Frank Voogd Centennial Chr. School 3608 Sparks Street Terrace, BC V8G 2V6 Phone: (604) 635-6173</p> <p>VERNON, B.C.: Vernon Chr. School, due to the anticipated increased student enrollment, is seeking applications for an opening in the intermediate grade levels for the 1992-93 school year. Those interested in this teaching position are encouraged to direct inquiries and/or send resumes to:</p> <p>Elco Vandergrift, R.R. #3, Site 19A, Comp. 4, Vernon, BC V1T 6L6 Phone: (604) 545-7345</p>	<p>THE CONSULATE-GENERAL WOULD LIKE TO COME IN CONTACT WITH THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:</p> <p>van den BURG, Gerrit, born October 20, 1926, immigrated to Canada on February 13, 1951, member of the 4th Bat. of Garde Regiment Grenadiers.</p> <p>CAMPBELL nee Kötter, Agatha Irmina Maria, born July 6, 1927, married to Major Aubrey Campbell (who was born December 20, 1922 in Essex) on March 15, 1947 in Amherstburg, immigrated to Canada on June 6, 1953, last known address in Canada: 224 Fort Street, Amherstburg, Ontario.</p> <p>van GOOR, H., born June 10, 1926, in April 1950 lived at Kremersweg 12, Wieringen, immigrated August 8, 1974 to Revelstoke B.C., member of the 4th Bat. of Garde Regiment Grenadiers.</p> <p>HOFLAND, Pieter Everardus Johannes, Born May 14, 1927, last known address in the Netherlands: Den Haag, immigrated to Canada May 31, 1958, last known address: Bownes.</p> <p>de JONG, Nelly, born December 20, 1925 in Rotterdam, immigrated March 9, 1951 to Holland Landing in Canada.</p> <p>KRIST, René Robert, born March 25, 1960 in Toronto, last known address: Leusdenhof 66, 1108 CV Amsterdam, assumed to have returned recently to Canada.</p> <p>de LONGTE-NOORDIJK, Petronella, born November 27, 1941 in Hilversum, last known address in the Netherlands: Den Haag, immigrated to Canada in 1967, last known address in Canada: 50 Grassmere Crescent, Brampton, Ont.,</p> <p>SIJTSEMA, Dhr Harmen, born April 26, 1928 in Ferwerderadeel gemeente Hallum, last known address in the Netherlands: Leeuwardersdeed, immigrated to Canada August 7, 1958.</p> <p>van der SPOEL (or Khoehler/Kochler), Pieter, stepbrother of Llewellyn Rosslyn Milliken who was born in Indonesia June 22, 1921.</p> <p>STOLK, Dieles, born April 29, 1927, last known address in the Netherlands: Gruttostraat 20, Haarlem, immigrated to Canada March 25, 1960.</p> <p>STOOPS (married name Versteegen or Versteeg), Jo, daughter of Gerardus Cornelius Stoops of Ulrum, with a son named Gidius Versteegen or Versteeg and a daughter named Nettij, immigrated about 20 years ago to Canada.</p> <p>van VALKENBURG, Wouter Willem Adriaan, born April 20, 1928 in Kockengen, last known address in the Netherlands: Voorstraat 34, Kockengen, immigrated to Canada April 20, 1954.</p> <p>CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS 1 DUNDAS ST. WEST, SUITE # 2106, BOX 2 TORONTO, ONTARIO M5G 1Z3 PHONE: (416) 598-2520 FAX : (416) 598-8064</p>
<p>Rotterdam, Hamilton, the Neth. Ont. 1942 1992</p> <p>On July 1, 1992, the Lord willing, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,</p> <p>BERT and MARTHA VERWEY (nee Louwsma)</p> <p>It is our hope and prayer that the Lord may continue to bless and guide them.</p> <p>With thankfulness for the love and guidance they have given to us:</p> <p>Gilbert Verwey — Hamilton, Ont.</p> <p>Henk & Sandra Verwey — Winnipeg, Man.</p> <p>John & Roberta Verwey — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Jean & Martin Aalders — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Jerry & Debbie Verwey — Victoria, B.C.</p> <p>Mar & Art Groenevelt — Bracebridge, Ont.</p> <p>Joan Verwey — Burlington, Ont.</p> <p>19 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.</p> <p>Please join us at an open house at the Old Ancaster Town Hall, 300 Wilson Street East, Ancaster, Ont., from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. on July 4, 1992.</p> <p>Home address: 82 Whitney Ave., Hamilton, ON L8S 2G5</p>		<p>Obituaries</p> <p>Kortehemmen Hamilton Psalm 42 On Sunday, May 31, 1992, the Lord took home,</p> <p>HINKE BROUWER (nee Altena)</p> <p>in her 62nd year, after a long and courageous battle with cancer, our dear sister, sister-in-law and aunt. Lovingly remembered by:</p> <p>Marcus & Jantje Altena — Drachten, Fr.</p> <p>Sietse & Jo Altena — (both deceased)</p> <p>Meintje & Jappie Visser — Heerenveen, Fr.</p> <p>Philip & Jean Altena — Caledonia, Ont.</p> <p>Linze & Elly Altena — Hoogeveen, Dr.</p> <p>Wilma & Case Bosma — Hamilton, Ont.</p> <p>and many nieces and nephews.</p> <p>Correspondence address:</p> <p>Mr. Peter Brouwer, 21 Springside Dr. Hamilton, ON L9B 1M5</p> <p>Andijk, N.H. Grimsby, Ont. 1914 1992</p> <p>We mourn the passing away and rejoice in the translation to eternal glory of our father and grandfather,</p> <p>CORNELIS KORT</p> <p>at Shalom Manor after a lengthy and difficult struggle with silicosis and cancer. Predeceased by his loving wife Lysbeth and survived by his children:</p> <p>Margaret & Jouke Schaafsma — Dunnville, Ont.</p> <p>Tina Kort — Botswana</p> <p>Bill & Jenny Kort — Georgetown, Ont.</p> <p>Harry & Judy Kort — St. Catharines, Ont.</p> <p>John & Linda Kort — Indian Head, Sask.</p> <p>Clarence Kort — Calgary, Alta.</p> <p>Gerdy & Tom Carr — Beamsville, Ont.</p> <p>Doreen & Paul Charbonneau — Victoria, B.C.</p> <p>as well as 18 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and a brother and sister in the Netherlands.</p> <p>"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21: 4).</p>	<p>Accommodations</p> <p>Student accommodations, Guelph, Ont. Share condo, appliances included, semi furnished. Girls only. Close to public transportation. Possession Sept. 1, 1992. Please call (519) 853-3404 for further details. Ask for Annie or Barbara.</p> <p>Vacation</p> <p>Lakewood Christian Campgrounds R.R. #5, Forest, ON N0N 1J0 Phone (519) 899-4415 or (519) 245-1225</p> <p>Lakewood consists of 125 acres of land, ponds, wooded trails, a creek, family camping and group camping area. Large pool facilities. Long nature and biking trails.</p> <p>WASAGA BEACH</p> <p>Still looking for a great holiday? Come to Alton Lodges and enjoy our nine miles of sandy beach. Safe swimming for everyone. One- and two-bedroom housekeeping cottages. Give us a call at (705) 429-2420. Your hosts: Len and Rita Bette, Alton Lodges, R.R. #1, Site 130, Box 8, Wasaga Beach, ON L0L 2P0.</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>ALLISTON, Ont.: Alliston Community Chr. School is accepting applications for a combined Kindergarten and Principal relief teacher. Approximately 60 per cent would be Kindergarten, 40 per cent would be teaching in either Grade 5 and 6 or 7 and 8. Ability to teach French and music would be an asset. Please direct inquiries to:</p> <p>Ron Stewart R.R. #4, Alliston, ON L0M 1A0 Phone: (705) 435-3303 Fax: (705) 435-2827</p> <p>Real Estate</p> <p>THUNDER BAY DAIRY FARM — 413 acres - land & bldgs. \$360,000 - free stall - sl. floors - 2 x 6 parlour - 1629 Ltrs., quota, 85% is Class A, available at \$300/ltr. - cattle & mach. available. Woudstra, Real Estate, Orono, ON L0B 1M0 Phone (416) 983-5915</p>	<p>Calvinist Contact</p> <p>I want to subscribe to <i>Calvinist Contact</i>.</p> <p>Here is my cheque for \$37.50 (Cdn., including 7% GST); \$32.00 (U.S.) for one year (47 issues).</p> <p>Please start my subscription today.</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____</p> <p>Prov./State _____</p> <p>Code _____</p> <p>Send to:</p> <p>Calvinist Contact 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4 St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p>

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Help Wanted

SEEKING A PASTOR

First Chr. Ref. Church of Edmonton, Alberta, is seeking a pastor to fill our vacancy and to lead us in worship and service. A church profile is available upon request. Please send inquiries and resumes to:

The Search Committee, c/o Mrs. Bertha Van Essen, 11126-67 Street, Edmonton, AB T5B 1K8.

This Week's Puzzle

by Manny Miller

ACROSS

1 Cobbler's tool
4 Donahue of TV
8 "The Wizard —" (comic strip)
12 Fictional king
14 Take for — (trick)
15 Houston school
16 Craps cry
19 Dense
20 In a nimble way
21 Not mounted
24 Dwelling: abbr.
25 Italic tongue
28 Funny Imogene
30 — Knievel
34 Subside
35 Cape and French
37 "— Yankee Doodle..."
38 Hall-of-Famer Clemente
40 Charm
42 Hodges of baseball
43 Traffic sign
45 Southern signature
46 Kind of school: abbr.
48 1549
49 Vintage car
50 Copy
52 Start fighting
54 Finish conversation
58 In danger
62 Jolson hit
65 Lab vessel
66 Bouquet flowers
67 Markdown event
68 Jokers
69 TV's Trebek
70 Gained

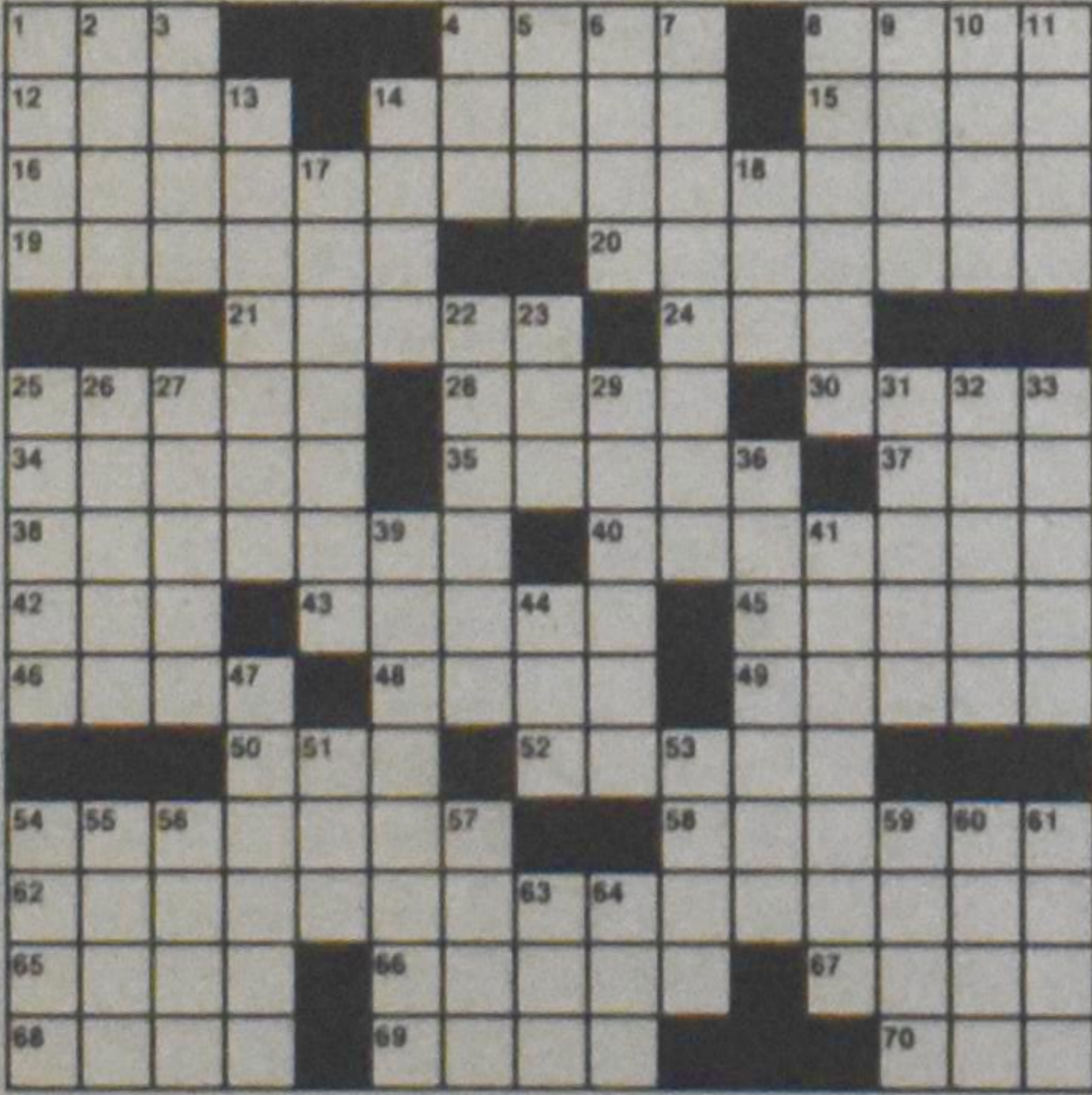
DOWN

1 Besides
2 Sob
3 Molten rock
4 Links VIP
5 Hymn homophone
6 Brainstorm
7 Actress born

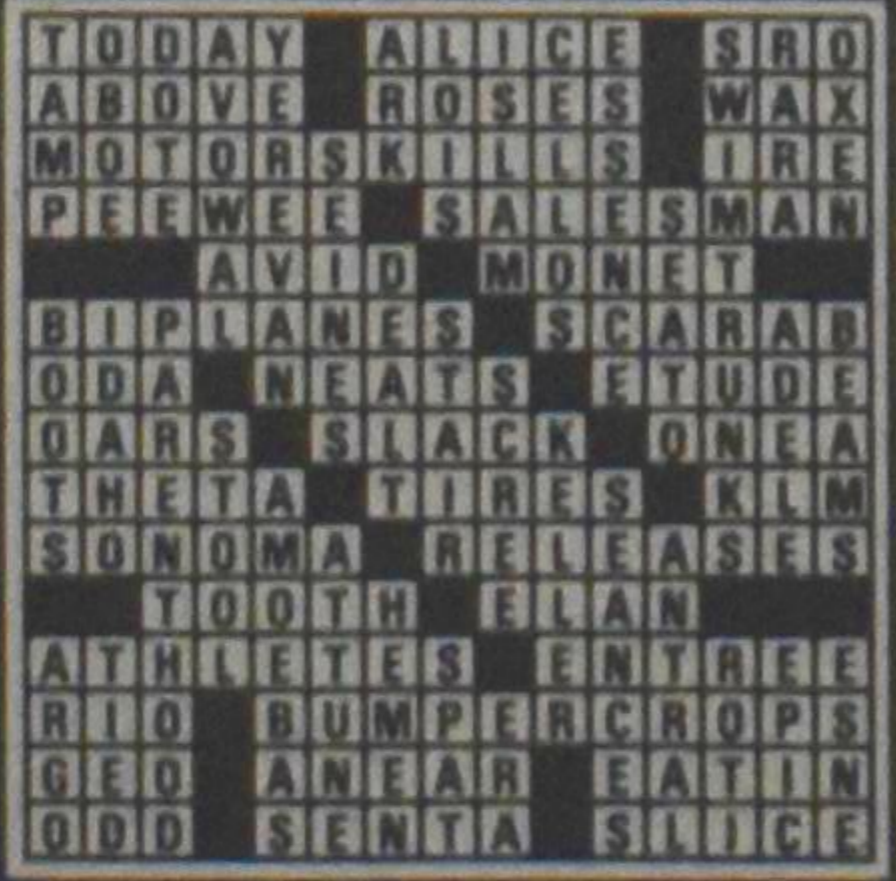
Lyova
Rosenthal
8 Ultimatum words
9 Usual quitting hour
10 Reykjavik's land: abbr.
11 Declare untrue
13 Avenge
14 Experts
17 Convent
18 Tell a tale
22 Reverberated
23 Besides
25 Sweater size
26 Seething
27 Set aside
29 Baby's bed
31 Liquid containers
32 Host
33 Synthetic rubber
36 Ending musical passage
39 "— change" (campaign cry)

41 Vacation places
44 Fleur-de—
47 Flat fishes
51 Cooking item
53 N.M. art colony
54 Meat dish
55 Tiny bit
56 Shallow bell

57 Simpleton
59 "The Last Time — Paris"
60 Missile shelter
61 Sharp
63 Mao —tung
64 Austin's state: abbr.




Last week's puzzle



Calendar of Events

June 28	Dutch service led by Rev. Ralph Koops, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.	July 15-17	Coffee Break/Story Hour Leaders Convention at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont.
July 1	Frisian picnic, 25th anniversary, at 11 a.m., Pinehurst Conservation Area, near Paris, Ont.	July 20-24	All Ontario Calvinist Cadet Campout, Scugog Island, Durham Region. Theme: United in the Spirit.
July 4,5	40th anniversary, Bethel CRC, Exeter, Ont. Saturday evening: barbecue dinner; Sunday morning worship, Rev. H. Heeg; Sunday evening: special music. For info. call: (519) 666-0048 (after 6 p.m.); (519) 666-1230 (days).	July 31 - Aug. 3	Annual ICSSummer Family Conference at Hamilton District Chr. High School, Ancaster, Ont. Theme: "Aspects of Contemporary Culture." Keynote speaker: Dr. Bill Romanowski. Entertainment by Ken Medema. For info. call (416) 979-2331.
July 4,5	Twenty-fifth anniversary CRC, Penticton, B.C. Call (604) 498-3749.	Aug. 20	Lakewood Senior Citizens' Day with Rev. Martin D. Geleynse, 9:30 a.m., Lakewood Chr. Campgrounds, Forest, Ont.
July 8	Hollandse Dag, 10 a.m., Mount Brydges Caradog Community Centre. Speaker: Rev. Adrian Van Geest. Medewerking Klompdancers. Lunch en beker meenemen.	Aug. 22	Boersma/Feddema family reunion, 11 a.m., Rockwood Conservation Area, Rockwood, Ont.
July 11,12	40th anniversary, Lindsay CRC, Lindsay, Ont. Potluck supper July 11 at 6 p.m. Special services July 12 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. For info. call (705) 328-1342.	Sept. 4-7	Fortieth anniversary and reunion Bethel CRC, Brockville, Ont. Register before August 5 by calling (613) 348-3569.
July 13-28	ICS Summer Education course, Teaching the Elementary Language Arts. Instructor: Dr. Robert W. Bruinsma, Ass. Prof. The King's College. Location: 229 College St., Toronto, Ont. For info. call: (416) 979-2331.	Oct. 10	Fortieth anniversary Bethel CRC, Saskatoon, Sask. Contact Mr. H. Denie before Sept. 1. See C.C. June 12, 1992, for details.

Help Wanted



ONTARIO ALLIANCE OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

2 SECRETARIES

required for Sept. 1, 1992

Full-time: Work will involve tasks in reception, desk top publishing, typing and general support. Preference will be given to applicants demonstrating creative initiative and experience in computerized systems.

Part-time: This is a 2 days/week opportunity involving typing and bookkeeping. Preferences will be given to people familiar with accountancy and computerized systems.

Interested persons are invited to apply in writing stating qualifications and experience before July 17, 1992, to:

Ralph Luimes
Public Relations Coordinator
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools
777 Highway 53 East, P.O. Box 7220
Ancaster, ON L7G 3L4
Tel.: (416) 648-2100 Fax: 648-2110

Ralph Vording
Board Chair

Adrian Guldemon
Executive Director

PASTOR/DIRECTOR

INDIAN AND METIS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF REGINA

The Committee for Ministry with Indian and Metis People in Canada (a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church) and the Indian and Metis Christian Fellowship of Regina are accepting applications for an ordained Pastor/Director.

Duties include counselling, preaching, administration (including supervision of other personnel and budgeting), creation of relevant programs, and regular reporting to the Committee for Ministry.

Members of the Fellowship are looking for an individual who respects Native culture, has some cross-cultural experience, is a team player, has musical ability, is able to empathize and serve others, and has a vision for ministry. The applicant must have certification from a Bible College or Seminary, and be eligible for ordination.

Applicants must be familiar with and in support of the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church. Applicants may apply before July 6, 1992, to:

Angela Terpstra
c/o Luther College
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0A2
Fax: (306) 585-5267

Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Time change
— First Chr. Ref. Church of Rocky Mountain House, Alta., will hold its second service at 7:00 p.m. each week, effective immediately.

Classis meeting
— Classis Hamilton will meet in regular session on Wed., Sept. 23, 1992, at the CRC, York, Ont. All matters for the agenda should be sent by August 11 to John Elgersma, Stated Clerk, R.R. #1, Cayuga, ON N0A 1E0.



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News

'Christ for Russia' grows and is promised help by Dutch churches



Baptism is a sign of hope in the churches of the former Soviet Union.

Photo: courtesy Nick Vogelzang

Bill Fledderus

DENVER, Colorado — After two years of talk about setting up Reformed seminaries in the former Soviet Union, the tiny organization "Christ for Russia" is slowly growing and developing new overseas contacts.

Recently the group's director Rev. Nick Vogelzang was contacted by some churches of the *Vrijgemaakte Kerken* (so-called "Article 31 churches"), a Reformed denomination in the Netherlands.

Representatives of a 10,000 member body of *Vrijgemaakte* churches in the Dutch province of Gelderland told Vogelzang their churches want to expand their missionary efforts into the same areas which interest Christ for Russia.

The Dutch group recently sent a fact-finding delegation to Ukraine and promised to share the results of its trip. Vogelzang hopes that relations with the Dutch could be a big boost for his

organization.

Translating confessions

Christ for Russia does not yet have enough money to finance any Soviet seminaries, so it is focusing its attention on developing contacts, on keeping up with the Christian translation work being done here in North America and on raising funds.

The organization has signed up volunteers (Russian and Ukrainian speakers and others) who are promising to travel, build and teach for the organization in the former Soviet Union sometime in the future. Christ for Russia continues to search for a seminary president and a development director.

Vogelzang reports that many Christian works are already available in the Russian and Ukrainian languages, and that work is continuing on various creeds and confessions, including the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Three Forms of Unity*, the *Westminster Confession* and a recent introductory manual to the Reformed faith. Important theological works by Calvin, Berkhof and De Jong are also currently in translation.

Christ for Russia has also been promised a gift of \$50,000 if it can raise an equivalent amount by the end of this year, adds Vogelzang.

Dordt College participates in educational reform in Russia

Robert VanderVennen (From a Dordt College release)

SIOUX CENTRE, Iowa — Dordt College is taking part in a new "Russian

Initiative" as one of 15 members of the 75-member Coalition of Christian Colleges. The Initiative is a response to a Russian request for help to reform its

system of higher education.

Business professor Dr. John Visser is one of 12 Coalition faculty members chosen to help write a values-based curriculum for a Master of Business Administration program to be used in the Russian republic. He visited Moscow last August-September, has worked on portions of the curriculum during the past academic year, and will return to Russia this summer to meet with co-operating Russian professors.

Vice-president Dr. Rockne McCarthy and his wife Joan plan to spend a week each in Moscow and in St. Petersburg this summer attending lectures and briefings on the status and future of the region's fledgling democracy. McCarthy will join discussions on restructuring the educational system to best serve a pluralistic society.

Lack of knowledge major problem

Ron Vos, an agriculture professor, expects to spend two weeks in the Vladimir oblast, some 60 kilometres from Moscow. He will be assessing resources, needs and potential for farmland that has been returned to particular Christian groups there. Vos says that lack of basic planting and harvesting knowledge — not a lack of equipment — is the major obstacle stunting Russian agriculture. He believes that Christians linking up with Russian Christians can provide the education for a fruitful long-term solution.

Russian co-operation with the Coalition started even before the breakup of the Soviet Union. A pilot project began in early 1990. Five broad areas of co-operation were identified: student and faculty exchanges,

News digest

Bill Fledderus, column editor

Special education grants cut

VICTORIA — British Columbia's NDP provincial government recently discontinued grants for special education in independent schools, according to a report in *Christian Info News*. Special education services are the "extras" offered to accommodate students who are blind, deaf, have a learning disability or use a wheelchair.

The cuts will affect 5,200 students and save the government about \$2.5 million. The government continues to provide 50 per cent financing for most independent schools, which includes a restricted amount for special needs students.

At the same time, Ontario independent schools are awaiting a July court decision which they hope will have the opposite effect.

Muslim Brotherhood registers in Jordan

AMMAN, Jordan (NNI) — The fundamentalist Islamic Muslim Brotherhood recently registered as a political party in Jordan, taking advantage of recently relaxed electoral laws. Political parties had been suspended in the kingdom since 1957.

In 1989, the Brotherhood cast off its disguise as a registered welfare organization and began overt political campaigning which won 22 of 80 seats in the Jordanian Chamber of Deputies. Now it has officially become a political organization.

The Brotherhood is committed to a state ruled by Sharia, the Islamic law which when applied in other countries has restricted the activities of the Christian church by disallowing meetings and limiting the movement of Christians in the country. The Brotherhood was founded by Hassan al Banna in Egypt in 1936, and first came to Jordan in 1946.

Parents establish new graduation practice

C.C. Staff

HUDSONVILLE, Mich. — For the first time since 1920, the board of the Hudsonville High School (a public high school in Hudsonville, Mich.) did not present each member of the graduating class with a Bible. The practice was discontinued because one set of parents threatened to make a formal complaint if the school board continued to use tax dollars on religious materials.

The graduating students did receive their Bible though. A few parents contacted the headquarters of The Bible League near Chicago and persuaded the

league to donate 165 copies of "The Student Bible" to the Parent Support Group which plans and supervises the traditional "All-Nighter" graduation party.

In the early hours of the morning after the party, some parents stood at the doorway and offered students their Bible as they boarded the bus home. Only five students declined to receive a Bible.

According to one of the parents, "The kids were very receptive to it. So we are making plans to hand out Bibles at the 'All-Nighter' every year now."

Manitoba could lose Lord's Prayer in schools

WINNIPEG — Justice Michel Monnin is thinking and going over his notes. He will decide the fate of the existing Manitoba Public School Act, the last provincial education act still in effect which requires religious exercises (the Lord's Prayer) in its schools.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* recently reported that in a civil court challenge, the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties (MARL) charged that the act is discriminatory and that it goes against the promises of freedom of religion and conscience in the Canadian

Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The province's lawyer, Glen McFetridge, reportedly argued that there is no element of coercion in school prayer because individuals and entire school boards are allowed to opt out. He also argued that under the Manitoba Act of 1870, mandatory religious exercises should be considered exempt from Charter review.

Similar court challenges in Ontario and British Columbia have forced the dropping of any references to the Lord's Prayer as part of opening exercises.

translation of English curriculum materials, promotion of Russian and English language instruction, and joint research projects. Student exchanges started in 1991.

"It rarely happens that a major power asks for the assistance of foreigners in reforming its higher education system," says Dr. John A. Bernbaum, the Coalition's co-ordinator for the Russian Initiative program. "This is truly a historic moment in the former Soviet Union, a time of crisis and momentous change. The time has come for a response." Discussions include the possible founding of a Christian institute or college in Russia.

Dordt will contribute \$5,000 a year for three years to the project, and McCarthy will represent the college on its Advisory Council. Dordt's participation reflects the college's commitment to global/cross-cultural education. Dordt expects to gain from student, faculty and administrator exchanges.